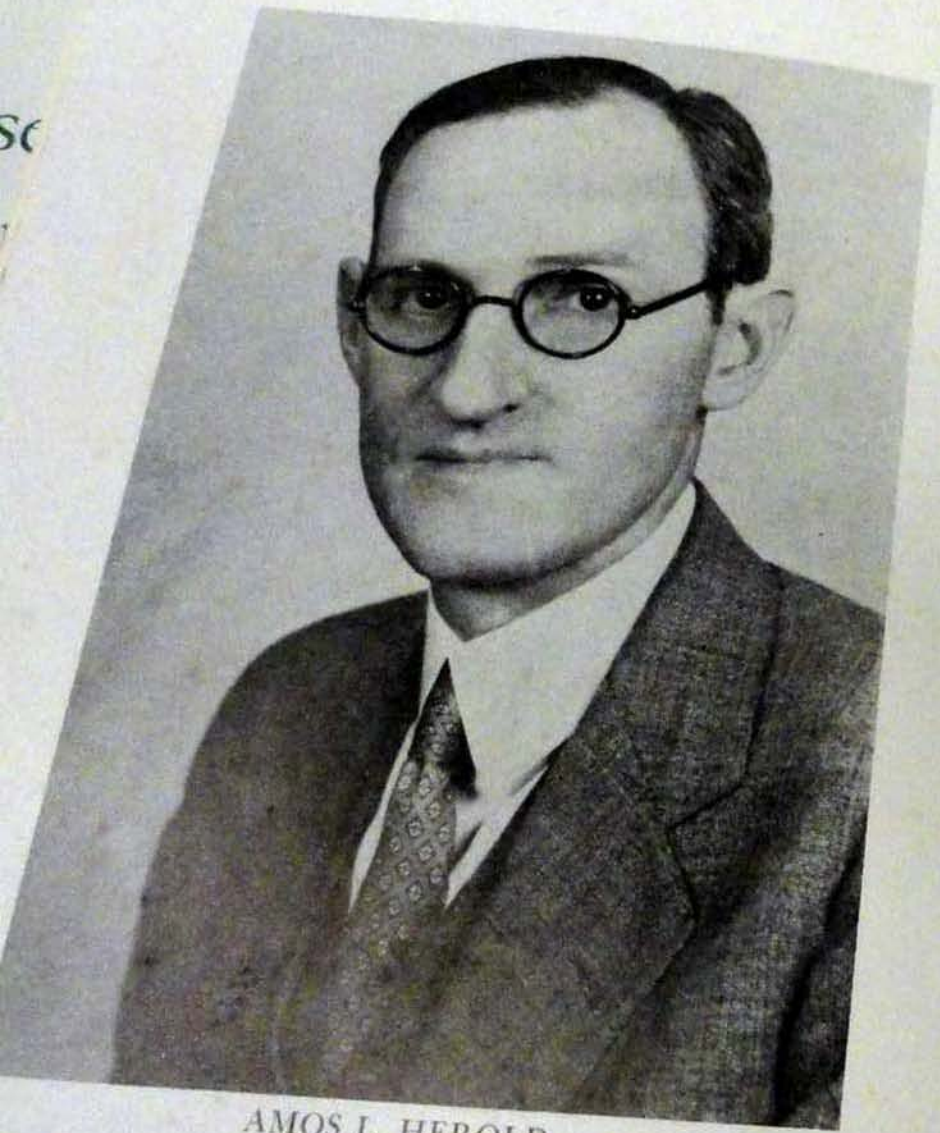

AMOS L. HEROLD
AT THE AGE OF FORTY

I CHOSE TEACHING

A Life Record of Self-Reliance and Devotion to Scholarship and Democracy

by AMOS LEE HEROLD

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Amos L. Herold
December 12, 1958
To My Dear Cousin
Mabel Milligan Price

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CHAPTER 2

Happy Hunting Ground

BORN on Back Creek in Highland County, Virginia, I grew up on a Knapp's Creek farm in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, which are adjoining sections with the main Allegheny Mountain dividing them. Highland is a small upland county in the Valley of Virginia, lying between the Allegheny and Shenandoah Mountains, with three small parallel ranges intervening, where rise the headwaters of the James and South Potomac Rivers. Back Creek flows south along the eastern base of the Allegheny into the Jackson River, which joins the Cowpasture to form the famous James River. In Pocahontas County on the west slope of the Allegheny, the Greenbrier flows southwest through the center of Pocahontas toward the Ohio River. Its chief branch, Knapp's Creek, rising at the foot of Paddy's Knob in the Allegheny, meanders south and west through a beautiful valley 20 miles long to join the Greenbrier at Marlinton and to provide Indians and white men with an easy approach to a low

gap across the Allegheny west of Paddy's Knob, the highest point between the two counties. Through this picturesque mountain gap passes a good modern automobile road with only one sharp curve on the Virginia side and on top of the Alleghany is another scenic highway.

Here, two centuries ago, in spring, summer, and autumn was a Happy Hunting Ground of the Indians, an earthly paradise to delight both red men and white men and to lead to strife and the bloody frontier wars for control and possession. So plentiful in this mountainous region was the game that a pioneer and his rifle were seldom separated. My great-grandfather, Samuel Ruckman, related that one day in his early life he set out on horseback on an errand a few miles away with his trusty rifle. Chancing upon a fine deer, he shot it and hung it up in a tree till he should return. Farther on, he killed a second deer. Deciding then to change his plans, he returned with two deer to his family. One old hunter in Pocahontas County, John Barlow, born in 1781, estimated that in his lifetime he had killed 1,500 deer – once six in a single day.

With deep, narrow valleys and high, oval mountains growing white pine, hemlock, and hardwood trees of several kinds, this region, at an elevation of 2,000 to 4,500 feet, is famed for its natural beauty of hills and streams, forests and bluegrass pastures. Under restrictive regulations deer are once more plentiful and hunters still find a happy hunting ground, which also is the home of many contented, hard-working Americans, who show their love for their native region by many happily chosen names of places, such as Blue Grass, Clover Creek, and Green Bank.

Monterey, the county seat of Highland, lies on a watershed between the sources of the James and Potomac Rivers at a cooling elevation of 3,000 feet; and grass-topped Paddy's Knob with grand views in all directions is nearly one mile high. How cool and refreshing are the breezes there to reward the climber! How refreshing to find there a dripping spring of clear water near the very top of the mountain!

My earliest recollections are enduringly glorified by the beauty, the majesty, and the mystery of these ancient mountains, which in the geologic ages rose up so slowly that the James, Potomac, and New Rivers succeeded in cutting gorges through them, where they continue to flow. Most remarkable is the feat of New River, which, rising near the Atlantic in North Carolina and flowing northwest in the Valley of Virginia, breaks through the Allegheny Mountain to the Ohio River on its 2,500-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico. What natural wonders –

these imperious rivers that would not be stopped by mountains!

Perhaps the first Latin I learned was the motto of West Virginia — *Montani semper liberi* — Mountaineers are always free; and Virginia's, well fitted for the Revolution and often quoted — *Sic semper tyrannis* — Thus always to tyrants. Both mottoes impressed me deeply and soon became my own guiding principles.

Cousin Mary Erwin Overholt, the poet of my family, who was born on Back Creek and grew up in Highland, an orphan in my mother's family and her girlhood companion, wrote some lovely lines on "Father Allegheny":

With your lofty head in cloudland,
At your feet the rivers flow;
Fair and clear, they travel onward,
Scattering blessings as they go.

And the men who till your valleys,
The cattle on your thousand hills,
Bulwarked by your stately shoulders,
With content the prospect fills.

In your sons a certain grandeur,
A simplicity and truth,
And a nobleness of nature
You have nurtured from their youth.

Something more of manhood sturdy,
Of a gentle, stately grace
Has, methought, descended on them
From long gazing on your face.

Sure it is an inspiration
To the nobler side of man,
To behold you pointing skyward,
Saying, 'If you will, you can!'

In this Happy Hunting Land of the Virginia mountains, birds, game fish, and wild animals were abundant. In this region ornithologists recently identified about 300 different kinds of birds. Besides the songsters, they list ducks, herons, bobwhites, pheasants, turkeys, hawks and eagles, woodpeckers, whippoorwills, cardinals, humming birds, blue jays, sparrows, swallows, robins, and bluebirds.

Among the wild animals, now extinct, were elk and buffalo, though they are still remembered by such place names as Buffalo

Gap in Virginia and Elk River and Elk Mountain in West Virginia. Deer were plentiful then as nowadays with restricted hunting to protect the does. Rabbits were innumerable and prolific; raccoons, foxes and squirrels of several kinds, ground hogs, skunks, and o'possums abounded. Four wild animals, dangerous and destructive to man and other animals, were the bear, wolf, panther, and wildcat – all scarce now but persistent. Wolves and even panthers would sometimes hunt in packs of five to ten animals. Though panthers usually stalk their prey singly, a hunter in Pocahontas County once shot nine in succession at the same spot, and then fled to Huntersville for his life. So eager were the pioneers to get rid of wolves that Pocahontas bounties on wolf scalps rose from $5 in 1826 to $15 in 1855. All four animals along with the Indians were a dreaded menace on the Virginia frontier.

Of the many animal stories I have read or heard I will relate two about the panther, also called cougar, puma, and mountain lion, which is a long, powerful, catlike animal of a man's weight, tree-climbing, long-jumping, and deceitful; at times screaming like a terrified woman; cunning and respected by man and other beasts. It is not so large and strong as a bear, but is larger and more dangerous than a wolf or a wildcat. When I was a boy, I heard alarming stories of one or two seen or heard in our neighborhood. Like some other animals, the panther has a trick of covering up its kill for later use.

Calvin W. Price, editor of *The Pocahontas Times,* in 1939 published the story of an old-time hunter who went to sleep while waiting for deer at a stand or lick on Elk River. Toward morning he awoke hot and smothering under a pile of leaves. Recognizing at once an animal's trick or stratagem, he sprang out of the leaves and climbed a nearby tree, carrying his rifle with him. As day was breaking, he heard and then saw a great panther creeping slowly nearer and nearer, accompanied by two half-grown cubs. With a flying leap the beast soon landed on the pile of leaves, hitting and clawing with all four paws simultaneously. Keenly disappointed to find the game gone, she screamed vicious curses like the devil himself. The hunter then took careful aim and shot the brute between the eyes.

Another story told by Mr. Price shows that the Lord never intended the panther or cougar for a house pet. A sporting pioneer of Pocahontas County in his youthful ardor for novelty had tried to tame and domesticate a captured panther kitten. He and his pet were almost inseparable companions. Between this pet and the Negro servants, however, there was so much antipathy

that he dared not leave it at home unless securely tied. The owner prized his pet so much and was so fearful the Negroes would kill it that he let it sleep near his bed even after it had grown to weigh more than 100 pounds. One night he was awakened by the cat's licking his throat with a sandpaper tongue. Excited, it would lick and then pinch with its teeth, each pinch becoming a little harder. When the blood was almost oozing through the skin, the man decided that its ministrations had gone far enough. So he swiftly beat off the panther and with his gun shot the blood-thirsty beast.

The Valley of Virginia

The famous Valley of Virginia, which lies between the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains, 30 to 50 miles wide, extending 300 miles from Maryland to North Carolina, and drained by the Shenandoah, James, New, and Tennessee Rivers, was first widely and favorably publicized in 1716 by Governor Spotts-wood's expedition across the Blue Ridge in northern Virginia. His party consisted of 50 persons — state officials, gentlemen with their retainers, a small company of rangers, and four friendly Indians, with lots of baggage and liquor carried on pack animals. After descending into the Valley and crossing the Shenandoah River, the governor with much ostentation took possession of the territory for King George I of England.

Though the governor was chiefly interested in combatting French encroachments on the northwest frontier, the glowing descriptions of the Valley spread by the party induced hunters to visit it, and within a few years German and Scotch-Irish settlers from Pennsylvania began to enter the Valley and to find homes away from persecution in Europe and annoying restrictions in the Quaker state. Joist Hite led the Germans, and the heroic John Lewis led the Scotch-Irish, who settled in and around Staunton, Virginia. By 1738 so many pioneers had entered the Valley that the Virginia colony created two new counties there — Augusta, including about five later states, and Frederick, a much smaller unit in the lower Shenandoah. By 1750 this typical melting pot of Scotch-Irish, Germans, and English was overflowing the Allegheny into the present state of West Virginia.

At this point I should like to quote a pen picture of pioneer experiences drawn by Joseph A. Waddell in his well-known *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia* (second edition, 1902, page 26):

"It is believed that all the earliest settlers came from Pennsylvania and up the Valley of the Shenandoah. It was several

years before any settlers entered the Valley from the east, and through the gaps in the Blue Ridge. We may accompany, in imagination, these immigrants on their way from the settlements north of the Potomac, through the wilderness, to their future home. There was, of course, no road, and for the first comers no path to guide their steps, except, perhaps, the trail of the Indian or buffalo. They came at a venture, climbing the hills, fording the creeks and rivers, and groping through the forests. At night they rested on the ground, with no roof over them but the broad expanse of heaven. After selecting a spot for a night's bivouac, and tethering their horses, fire was kindled by means of flint and steel, and their frugal meal was prepared. Only a scanty supply of food was brought along, for, as game abounded, they mainly 'subsisted off the country.' Before lying down to rest, many of them did not omit to worship the God of their fathers, and invoke His guidance and protection. The moon and stars looked down peacefully as they slumbered, while bears, wolves, and panthers prowled around. It was impossible to bring wagons, and all their effects were transported on horseback. The list of articles was meager enough. Clothing, some bedding, guns and ammunition, a few cooking utensils, seed corn, axes, saws, etc., and the Bible, were indispensable, and were transported at whatever cost of time and labor. Houses and furniture had to be provided after the place of settlement was fixed upon. We may imagine the leaders of each band, on arriving at a well-wooded and well-watered spot, exclaiming: 'This is my rest, and here will I dwell'."

Four Heroic Pioneers

Here I will introduce a few of my own 18th-century ancestors, who thus made homes in the Allegheny woods, and of whom I am rightly and justly proud. The stories of their courage, patience, virtue, and great accomplishments in the face of numberless dangers and difficulties are thrilling. Through at least three of them I can qualify as a Son of the American Revolution. For their descendants they risked their lives and their possessions on the frontier and the battlefield in order that we may enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Should we not be forever grateful and hold their names in lasting remembrance? Let me sketch four of my ancestral heroes.

1. Sergeant David Ruckman served in a New Jersey infantry regiment in the Revolution and was twice wounded at the battle of Monmouth. Later he had charge of a battery of artillery and at Yorktown he witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis in Octo-

ber, 1781. He was the grandfather of my grandfather, David Van Meter Ruckman. The sergeant's own father, James Ruckman, though an old man of 60 years in 1776, became a color bearer in a New Jersey regiment and was killed in the fighting on Long Island.

2. Captain (later Major) Andrew Lockridge had military service on the Virginia frontier and won the praise of Washington. In 1762 he married Jane Graham, a name famous in song and story. Both were Scotch-Irish and lived in the Valley of Virginia. Captain Lockridge led a company in the decisive battle with the Indians at Point Pleasant, (West) Virginia, in 1774, in which 1,000 pioneers defeated Cornstalk's warriors in a bloody encounter. His granddaughter, Elizabeth, married Henry Simmons Herold (1800-1890), my great-grandfather. My sincerest thanks to you, dear Elizabeth, for my inheritance and for putting me in touch with George Washington.

3. John Slaven (son of Irish John), a man of powerful physique, was a noted hunter, successful trapper, and veteran of the Revolutionary War. In spite of the many bloody fights he was in and the privations he endured in the service of his country, he lived to an old age. His daughter, Margaret, became the second wife of Samuel Ruckman in 1821, who was my mother's grandfather. My sincerest thanks to you, dear Margaret, for the Slaven gift and heritage.

4. But the most famous of this ancestral group is Moses Moore, who before the Revolution settled in the woods on Knapp's Creek, (West) Virginia, a mile below my later childhood home. In 1770 he bought there about 1,000 acres of unimproved valley land for two steel traps and two pounds of English sterling, along with a fine opportunity to be killed and scalped by the Indians on this exposed frontier. He hunted, he cleared lands, he built log houses and a water mill on Mill Run, reared nine or ten children with many descendants, and lived to tell the story of an exciting experience of captivity among the Indians in his early life. When I was a boy, I knew his grandson Andrew, an old man of 80 years, who was the source of this captivity adventure as retold by William T. Price in *Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County* (1901). Moses Moore's granddaughter, Malinda, became my great-grandmother, Mrs. Samuel Harper. My sincerest thanks to you, dear Malinda, for this Moore and Harper heritage.

His Experiences in Captivity

Moses Moore's story related that in his early life in the fron-

tier region, he spent much time hunting on Back Allegheny and along the Greenbrier River; that he was a close observer of the Indians and a cunning hunter in avoiding them. There was a certain place where the Indians were in the habit of crossing the river, using a long pole to leap over the stream and leaving it on the side where they were scouting. The Indians got wise to this interpretation and began to throw the pole back to the opposite side so as to deceive the wary white man.

This change of practice threw Moses Moore off his guard. So, one Saturday he set his traps, looked after the deer signs, and prepared his camp for a quiet and restful Sabbath spent in repose and devotional reading of the Bible. About daylight on Sunday he put a fat turkey to roast and was lying on a bear skin reading a lesson from the Scriptures, preparatory to meditation and prayer before breakfast, a practice characteristic of the Scotch-Irish of that period.

Presently he heard the breaking of a stick and looking intently in the direction of the sound, he saw five or six Indian warriors aiming their guns at him and moving cautiously toward him. Thus hemmed in without a chance to escape, he threw up his hands and signaled for them to come to him. He then put the turkey before them and made signs for them to eat. They refused until he ate some himself. Then they ate ravenously and the turkey soon disappeared with only the bones remaining.

After this breakfast they started for their home in Ohio. When they halted for any length of time, they would securely bind the prisoner with buffalo thongs and pinion him to the ground. Once they thus halted to secure and smelt ore, which they carried home with them. After a long journey through the wilderness they reached their Ohio wigwams at or near Chillicothe on the Scioto River.

The Indians were excited and elated over the capture. As a special compliment to their squaw wives and sweethearts, they decided, in a solemn council, that the captive should run the gauntlet lined with the females of the tribe. So two lines of squaws were drawn up about six or eight feet apart and armed with knives, cooking utensils, and clubs.

One captive who had preceded Moore was stabbed, bruised, and hacked to pieces. This example made clear to him that his chance to survive the ordeal was slender. It looked like death to him. However, after he had entered the line and passed a little way, a squaw struck him with a long-handled frying-pan. He succeeded in wrenching the pan from her and knocked her down with his fist. He then proceeded along the line and, striking

viciously from right to left with the pan, he soon put many of the squaws to flight, to the intense amusement of the warriors.

When Moore had thus scattered his persecutors in the gauntlet line, the Indian men crowded around him, patted and praised him, saying, "good soldier, good soldier," and, admiring his skillful self-defence, decided that he should be allowed to live.

By degrees he obtained their confidence. They liked his skill in hunting and would let him have small portions of powder and shot. Slowly in secret he accumulated a surplus of ammunition, and he was eventually allowed to be away overnight, and later for two or three days, since he had the reputation of faithfully returning with game or other supplies.

With this secret supply of rations, powder, and bullets he finally escaped, getting so great a lead the Indians had little chance to recapture him. So he returned home and lived out his life without any more adventures with the red men, a timeless hero of his family and of his region.

Moses Moore and many of his descendants lie buried in the Moore graveyard on a slaty knoll beside the highway a mile below my old home. When I was a boy, one of his direct descendants, Cousin Isaac Brown Moore, father of my playmates, represented Pocahontas County in the Legislature of West Virginia.

CHAPTER 3

Honoring My Ancestors

DURING the first quarter of the 19th century both my maternal and paternal ancestors, the Ruckmans and Herolds, were living on stock and grain farms in the same neighborhood on Back Creek of James River in what is now Highland County, Virginia. They were then pioneering neighbors, facing the same problems in the woods and helping each other as need or opportunity arose. Their private homes were the only churches, and the settlers co-operated in starting the primitive elementary schools.

About 1825, however, on the restless frontier they became separated, and were not closely associated again till my father in 1884 married into the Ruckman family. The pioneers, Christopher Herold and his wife Elizabeth, sold their home and 170 acres of land on Back Creek for $3,000 and with their children

removed across the Allegheny Mountain to the neighborhood of the present Minnehaha Springs in the new county of Pocahontas, (West) Virginia, where in the next 20 years Christopher purchased eight tracts of land, mostly timbered and totaling 6,000 acres, for $5,000. They reared seven sons and three daughters, lived to about 1860, and with two of their children are buried on the old farm on Douthard's Creek. When nearing the age of 90, Christopher died tragically by falling headlong into an open fire.

On the other hand, the Ruckman family remained for many years on Back Creek, increasing in numbers and acquiring more valuable lands, some of which are still occupied by their descendants, the children of Edwin A. and Lucy Ruckman Wade. But about 1890, when my grandmother, Annah Ruckman, inherited a fine farm from her father, on Long Glade, Augusta County, the Ruckmans removed there though still holding their lands in Highland County.

Maternal Ancestry

My mother's family, the Ruckmans, are said to be of Welsh stock. The original immigrant, Samuel Ruckman, was born on the border of Wales in 1643 and at the age of seventeen came to Long Island, where he married and left descendants. His son Thomas went to New Jersey, where his son James and grandson David were born and became soldiers in the American Revolution.

Sergeant David Ruckman (1747-1822) married Susannah Little (1756-1843) in New Jersey. Sergeant David had been in Virginia during the war, and he and his young wife had heard perhaps glamorous stories of life among the Virginia planters and aristocrats, and they decided to migrate to the Valley. A family tradition relates how Susannah imagined that Virginia was a land of gold and a heavenly place, where the very floors were not made of planks but either marble or fine mosaic. In light verse Cousin Mary concluded her dream with these lines:

They went. Of Susannah
I heard no more
Except this item
About the floor.

These floors were really
Not made of plank
But of mother earth
Well trodden, but dank!

David and Susannah Ruckman were blessed with ten children. Two of them died in infancy probably owing to the hardships of the frontier, dirt floors, and their dependence upon home remedies, because it was many years before they could get professional doctors, who usually lived at a distance with only trails or crude roads for traveling. Of these hardy pioneers one can learn little apart from legal and Bible records and the number and high quality of their offspring. We do know that four sons and four daughters reached maturity, and that by sound planning and persevering work, David and his wife became well established in Bath, later Highland County, Virginia, and gave their children a fair start in life.

Samuel Ruckman

Of these children, for our purpose, the most interesting and worthwhile is Samuel, their oldest son, the diarist, born in Somerset County, New Jersey, in 1783 and died at Mill Gap, Highland County, Virginia, in 1853. Obviously, Samuel received the elements of an education, because he kept a diary, served as a justice of the peace, and in the 1840's he was a leader in the formation of Highland County. By his first wife, Nancy Hartman, he had a brilliant son, John H., who received $20,000 for inventing or improving Gibbs' sewing machine, and two daughters, Mary and Nancy. By his second wife, Margaret Slaven (1791-1867), he had three daughters and three sons, the youngest of whom, David Van Meter, was my grandfather.

Samuel's diary, still in manuscript, is in two parts: The first, kept in three composition booklets, extends from August, 1804, to August, 1812, when he was in his 20's. The second part, on bound legal-cap paper, with one gap of three years, covers the last period of his life from December, 1839, to January, 1853. The diary reveals the author himself and supplies us with much valuable information regarding the customs and practices of his period. From it we learn that he was studious, bought books, owned a big dictionary, read and thought for himself, promoted temperance, functioned as local critic, willfully sought and succeeded like a good businessman in becoming rich in lands and stock, and left behind many colorful legends of himself and his dealings. At the age of 57 he recalls that he had been a feeble child though descended from a stout and able-bodied race. He writes of having a weak and delicate stomach and a small frame, almost dwarfish. Though his brothers weighed about 180 pounds, he varied from an early 160 to a later 145 pounds. So, he was always temperate and careful of his health. Compensatory bless-

ings were an original intelligence and a lively sense of humor. In his early life he read the entire Bible, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Biographia Philosophia*, Joseph Priestly's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, and Pope's *Essay on Man*. Quoting Pope's thought that "Reason is here no guide but still a guard," he soundly commented, "It appears to me that we have no better guide to follow than our best reason on all occasions." In his later life he read such books as Fisk's *Travels*, Dr. Combe on *Health*, a three-volume *Encyclopaedia of Geography*, Vosé's *Astronomy*, and Irving's *Life of Columbus*, which he borrowed in Pocahontas County.

His wisdom and convictions he also applied to current problems. For example, on January 8, 1836, at a local schoolhouse, Samuel delivered a 5,000-word temperance address, so forceful and timely that on March 1, 1931, it was published in full in the *Tulsa World*. In this well-written lecture he appealed to his hearers to join a total abstinence league as the best means of staying sober and of overcoming the liquor demon. In a long introduction he asserted that man's success is ever in doubt, because "his race is weak, his mind is weak, his powers are weak, weakness and feebleness attends his progeny." Lamenting idle talk, showy dress, overeating and drinking, he advised prudence and discretion in all things needful. While defining temperance as a prudent and proper use of a thing, he advocated total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks as good, sound doctrine. To succeed, temperance societies must practice total abstinence and association. To those who objected to the pledge as too binding and too restrictive of one's freedom, he declared that a freedom to do wrong or to get drunk is a poor, miserable freedom. Abandon the useless and injurious poison of drink. Unite against it as our patriot fathers united against John Bull and won. This fight is another revolutionary struggle with patriots supporting it and tories opposing it. He also denounced the sellers, manufacturers, and providers of liquor materials and called upon them to quit their occupations. "Drink not and you will not be drunk," he declared.

In his diary on May 8, 1844, in a blast at doctors, lawyers, and clergymen, he thus let off steam: "I can hardly keep my hands off of some of our clergymen. For I think I have reason to believe that many of them are in search of the fleece instead of the flock." The next month we find this effusion on superstition, the particular one being that a scar made on a tree would kill it, which he readily disproved by a test on a young apple tree: "What vain superstitious opinions some persons have imbibed

in their minds when young! And how hard to extricate them from the mind in after life! Unphilosophical and unreasonable, howsoever it may really be!"

He also tells of selling a herd of fat cattle to a distant buyer, Robert J. Glendy. At the appointed time the buyer came for the cattle, but he failed to bring the cash to pay for them according to their agreement. Samuel made this laconic record of the transaction in his diary: "No money came — no cattle went." For him mere promises to pay were not enough. When his daughter, Elizabeth, contrary to his wishes, married John P. Erwin on September 1, 1847, Samuel noted this fact and followed with a modern politician's, "No comment to make." However, from the match came the poet of the family, Mary Erwin Overholt, in whom Samuel's own taste for verse and scribbling it flowered into four volumes, in which Highland was well remembered. For example, Cousin Mary's "The Fountain" celebrates a wonderful spring near Beulah Church:

There was a spring I knew
Long years ago, that at the mountain's foot
Beneath cool trees, burst pulsing from the rocks,
Bubbling up clear as crystal, cold and sweet
From depth unknown, unfathomed, and forever,
Through summer's heat or winter's icy breath,
Unfettered and unshrunk it wandered on,
Singing a sweet song all the seasons through.
And for the love of that sweet song the flowers,
Tenderest and fairest, came in early spring
And leaned above the brink and listened there
Trembling and starry-eyed; the forget-me-not
And cowslip came, and the purple, meditative violet.
When flowers were gone, and all the trees were bare,
Amid the heavy snows that constant song
Still rippled from the surging water's heart.

So will some fount of memory olden,
All sweet and pure, untouched of time or stain,
Lift ever in the heart, and ever sing,
And round that memory,
Through all life's transitory joys and griefs,
Will bloom mind's immortelles,
The loveliest flowers of thought.
(From Year In, Year Out, at Echoes, 1934).

Samuel was an early riser and a methodical farmer. His family produced on the farm nearly everything needed to feed and

clothe themselves. Besides his regular helpers, he sometimes engaged itinerants if they could meet his somewhat eccentric tests. For example, to determine whether a prospective worker would do as directed, he might tell him to turn a grindstone all morning idly; or, he might order him to move a pile of stones from one place to another, and when finished, he would, with inner glee, tell him to move them back where they were at first! If the prospect complained or found fault, he would get no more work though he would be paid liberally for the tryouts!

Though Samuel lived most of his life in a log house at Mill Gap, in his old days he planned and produced native lumber for the construction of a substantial 10-room house, in which I was born. When Samuel died in 1853, his son David, my grandfather, continued and finished the building, which is still standing. Truly this house was substantial, because its walls were made by nailing long, two by six-inch pieces placed flat and lengthwise on the stone foundation and on top of each other for two stories, large rooms and a broad hall with a grand stairway, and then weatherboarded without and plastered within, with three brick chimneys to service fireplaces. Such a planner and such a man was Samuel Ruckman.

Grandfather Ruckman

Samuel's youngest son, David Van Meter Ruckman (1833-1905), my grandfather, inherited an independent spirit and considerable wealth from his diarist father but with more interest in business than in scholarship. In 1858 he married Annah Herring (1837-1892), the youngest daughter of Bethuel Herring of Long Glade in Augusta County, who was probably related to Lincoln's grandmother, Bathsheba. By this marriage he had nine children, my mother being the oldest, but his second wife, Elizabeth Eagle, was without issue. During the Civil War with the rank of colonel, David bought livestock for the Confederate armies. He was an energetic man with big ideas, who in the depression of 1873-1876 failed in the shipping business with liabilities of about $250,000; but, aided somewhat by his father-in-law, he retrieved himself in late middle life and accumulated in three counties properties worth about $100,000.

A story is related how effectively he could play the possum in outwitting a cattle buyer. On one occasion he and a competitor happened to meet at the home of a man with a herd to sell. After dinner grandpa professed to be sleepy and he lay down on a couch and presently began to snore intermittently, but all the while listening to the conversation between the owner and his

rival. Finally, in reply to a question, the owner named a price for which he would sell. While the rival pondered a little, grandpa rose up, saying, "I will take them at that price!" And forthwith he closed the deal to the consternation of his fellow buyer.

My grandfather was a large, heavy-set man with a short gray beard and a quick temper, but full of kindness and good deeds, especially for his kin far and near. We children were always glad to see him and do chores for him, such as rubbing his head for a little cash, for we, too, had inherited a bit of Samuel's zeal for wealth! Strangely enough he was my first correspondent, though he was busily engaged, buying and selling livestock and operating his farms. His hieroglyphic handwriting was so nearly undecipherable that only my inspired mother could read his replies to my childish letters.

When I was twelve years old, he gave me a large, one-volume *Encyclopedia of Universal Knowledge,* which I read and reread with much delight and benefit. It contained something about almost everything. It told how to study, how to write letters, how to observe good manners, and even how to conduct a courtship! It contained some history, a smattering of science, and the chief wonders of the world. It was just the book to whet a boy's appetite for knowledge. About the same time I came under the spell of another book, *How to Reach Success or Room at the Top,* which greatly stimulated my ambition to make my life useful and worthwhile, if possible.

My Cousin Mary, who spent her teenage years with the Ruckman family at Mill Gap, many years ago wrote for me her recollections of the family life. From her paper I quote short passages:

"During the years when I was a member of Uncle David's family, he was approaching middle age, and was the prominent cattle dealer of the section. His buying territory took in parts of four counties [Augusta, Highland, Bath, and Pocahontas], and he yearly shipped many hundreds of cattle to the northern markets. During the fall and early winter months he spent most of his time in these cities, making his headquarters in Baltimore. While thus forced to be absent from home he left his interests in the capable hands of Billy Ruleman, who had been with him for many years. The collecting of the different herds, the hiring of drovers, the sending off of droves of cattle to market, as well as looking after Uncle David's farms were all under the management of this efficient overseer.

"On his cattle-buying trips through his widely scattered territory Uncle David rode a mule named Peg. Her gait was a very rapid walk, a sort of amble that combined speed with the greatest

amount of ease for her rider, who spent continuous days in the saddle. At a signal from him she would lay back her ears and break into a rapid, smooth lope. There seemed a sort of human understanding between these comrades, and for many years she was his sole mount, bearing his weight on their long journeys over rough roads, up and down mountains, without any apparent distress. She was always sleek and well kept." [In his later life he drove a light two-horse buggy] . . .

"He had the open-handed hospitality of his time, and his house was a free inn for all who came that way. As a host he was genial, courteous, and his manner to ladies had the courtliness of the cavalier. In his own family he was autocratic and impatient. The older children often felt the weight of his heavy hand. He never took time to whip us when we erred. His temper exploded and swept all before it. He was thunder and lightning and cloudburst, and woe to the small craft in his path. . . .

"He had quite another side to his character, however. . . . He was kind to us in many ways, magnanimous even. He always brought us nice things from Baltimore and on Christmas eve it was he who stayed up and filled our stockings. Along with the candy and nuts he had some more permanent gift, a bit of jewelry perhaps. Then he indulged his sense of humor in filling the tops of our stockings with a handful of little chips or a switch. When we came downstairs at three Christmas morning to explore our stockings, he never failed to be awake, Aunt Anna said, and lay snoring but shaking with laughter at our indignant remarks about the chips, but he enjoyed just as much our delight in our gifts. He was always deeply concerned with our welfare and training, examining into our progress at school, and during hay harvest when the girls hauled hayshocks and there would be a number of hired men helping put up hay Uncle David strictly enforced the law that there should be no coarse or profane language used in our presence — nor at any time."

Yet, Cousin Mary held two grievances against my grandfather. One was that the three older children — she, her sister Annie, and my mother Kate — grew up in an atmosphere of dread when Uncle David was at home; that he never cared who was present when he chose to correct them. In consequence, she says, it was hard for the girls to maintain any dignity in the presence of strangers or air of self-possession with them, and so they were always shy and constrained. More important still, perhaps, Cousin Mary when about 12 to 15 met a well-to-do Yankee in the South, who, I suppose, recognizing her unusual gifts of mind, offered to give her an education in northern schools, for which she was very

ambitious. But her Uncle David would not consent, and, being in effect, if not actually, her guardian, his decision prevailed to the life-long disappointment of the unusually gifted girl, who soon qualified herself to teach the elementary subjects, married, came West, reared and educated her children and late in life, at my urging, she and her children privately published four volumes of good verse, some of which may well outlive more pretentious and publicized work such as that of John Gould Fletcher.

I will close this section with Cousin Mary's pen picture of my grandmother, Annah H. Ruckman, whom I remember somewhat vaguely as the embodiment of goodness and kindness: "Aunt Annah, Uncle David's wife, was ten [four] years his junior. She was quite small and delicately formed, fair with blue eyes, and light brown hair that waved naturally away from her broad forehead, small feet and hands, a typical Virginia lady with gracious, pleasing manners, a product of one of Staunton's best Girls' Finishing Schools. She was a very able manager, looking well to the way of her household, and keeping an excellent table, and well-stocked pantries. She was a devout member of the Presbyterian Church, and her home was the rendezvous of visiting Presbyterian ministers at all times, but the stopping place as well of Methodist ministers. Uncle David who never joined a church remained Methodist in his sympathies, his mother having been a Methodist."

Cousin Mary assures us that while life at Mill Gap then might seem dull to outsiders, there was excitement enough to fill every day; work and play, visiting the neighbors, attending church and Sunday school, singing and day school. There was adventure in everything — the coming of a stranger, riding spirited horses, turning saddle, the passing of a mile-long parade of cattle, apple cuttings, taffy parties, stirring of maple sugar, even the *protracted* meetings, which the Presbyterians called *distracted*.

Paternal Ancestry

My father's family was of German origin. In the 1740's three Herold pioneers emigrated from the lower Rhine Valley to Pennsylvania and settled there. But just before the Revolution one of this group, presumably George Michael Herold with his family, removed to the South Branch of the Potomac in Virginia. There, as we learn from the census of 1850, Christopher Herold was born in 1773. Son of an immigrant and without any schooling available on the frontier during the Revolution, he became a typical frontiersman, strong and ambitious but unschooled. In 1799 he married Elizabeth Cook of English origin

in Pendleton County, now West Virginia, and a little later they removed to Back Creek and bought farm lands near the Ruckmans, and reared a large family, the youngest of whom, Andrew Herold, an old man, I knew as a boy, hobbling around with his cane and living with his children on a farm adjoining my father's property on Knapp's Creek.

As already related, Christopher sold his farm and home on Back Creek and about 1825 removed to Pocahontas County. He succeeded in gratifying a strong appetite for improved and timbered farms. Some of his sons moved on to Nicholas County and bought more land, some of it underlain with coal, as their offspring later found out. But Christopher, his wife, and several of their children remained in Pocahontas, lived out their days, and are buried there.

Christopher Herold and Samuel Ruckman were friends and neighbors on Back Creek for about 25 years. They were sons of the Revolution who lived to the decade before the Civil War; both reared large families, accumulated considerable property, and were highly respected and typical citizens of that early period. But a spectacular difference to a modern observer is that Samuel mastered the art of writing and kept an irregular diary for the information and amusement of his descendants, whereas Christopher, in spite of his industry and practical success without schooling, adorned his last will and testament with a simple, unpretentious crossmark duly witnessed, as I know as the owner of this early document. Almost equally I prize these ancestors of mine, because each in his way accomplished so much in spite of handicaps. In Samuel's case it was feeble health, and in Christopher's, lack of elementary schooling in a forest of wild animals and Indians.

William T. Price, Presbyterian clergyman, scholar, and historian of Pocahontas County, from personal knowledge wrote the following tribute to Christopher: "Among the prosperous citizens of Pocahontas County in its early development, Christopher Herold deserves recognition of a special character. He was of pure German parentage – his immediate ancestry came from the fatherland, settling in Pennsylania, thence removing to Virginia. Though he could not read English no one would have suspected it, so well posted he seemed to be in political matters and current affairs. His powers of memory were surprising, and his business sagacity was equal to any of his contemporaries. He was honest and enterprising."

My grandfather, Washington Lanty Herold, patriotically named, was a son of Henry S. Herold (1800-1890) of Nicholas

County and a grandson of the original progenitor, Christopher. His father and his mother, Elizabeth Lockridge, had removed from Pocahontas to Nicholas in the 1840's, rearing five sons and five daughters and living there to be 90 and 92 years old, respectively. Washington, then a teenage boy, went with them, but, returning later to Pocahontas, he met and fell in love with 16-year-old Sarah Ann Harper of Knapp's Creek and in a successful run-away match married her at Christopher Herold's in 1855. They first lived on a small farm with a grist and lumber mill in the narrow gap two miles above Huntersville, which Washington and his brother Josiah had bought for $3200. My father was born there on April 12, 1857. Besides the valuable mill property, my father used to tell us that hidden away in the woods was a liquor still that also attracted customers. Later, after selling this property at a profit and being paid largely in Confederate money, Washington saw his savings disappear with the rebel cause. The family must have had a hard time for several years in passing through the aftermath of a terrible Civil War, because not until 1871 did they become firmly established again on 654 acres of land, once part of the Moses Moore lands on upper Knapp's Creek, the home of my boyhood.

This tract was part of 100,000 acres granted to the Greenbrier Company and surveyed under British auspices in 1752, but after the Revolution the owners had to get new titles from the American government. For the 654 acres, nearly all timbered with about one-third in the valley and two-thirds in the hills and Allegheny Mountain, Washington Herold agreed to pay Lanty Lockridge $2760 with no interest for nearly two years. Credits on the debt were as follows:

Three payments in 1874 amounting to $1,122, the savings of three years apparently. Next, in 1875, $300; in 1876, two payments for $642; in 1877, $654; in 1878, two payments for a total of $330; and in 1880, $130. In 1885, the year of my birth, a calculation showed that a balance of $6.35 was still due, which was paid. That was a long hard pull for Washington and Sarah Ann, who by 1880 had a family of five sons and four daughters — my uncles and aunts, born between 1857 and 1880. In 1922 the same tract with all the improvements and 25 more acres of valley land sold for $26,850 payable in cash and three annual installments with interest. But the good parents who had struggled so hard and long to become independent did not long enjoy the farm home with a new house and a new barn and other improvements. Washington's death in 1885 from asthma and allied ailments aggravated originally by excessive exertion in curbing a

forest fire that threatened to destroy logs for his home, was followed by that of his wife in 1888, and they lie side by side under the whispering pine trees of that home place.

My father, Wise Herold, who was the oldest child in Washington's large family, after his father's death became the main support of his mother and the younger children before they grew up and went West. Throughout the struggle to pay for the farm he had been his father's chief helper, since his next brother, Russell, was six years younger. My father was richly endowed with a long name, of which I first heard one day when I found the initials H. A. W. followed by Herold carved on a board fence at home. When I asked who HAW HEROLD might be, I was astonished to learn that the letters meant Henry Anderson Wise Herold, my father, who had been named for Governor Wise of Virginia and who had simplified his name just as I have always sought to simplify and make reasonable and intelligible the complexities of life.

He was a faithful and efficient farmer, who insisted that the corn rows should be straight, the weeds kept down, the fences up, and the brush cut. With him work always came before pleasure, which he found in useful activities. Most of his life was devoted to clearing, improving, and cultivating about half of the 654 acres bought by his father, the other half remaining a forest where sheep and cattle could browse in the summer months. Of the improved part about 60 acres were grain or meadow land and about 240 acres were pastures, mostly limestone hills but partly in the valley sprinkled with large pine stumps, as I knew it. The woodland, chiefly on the Allegheny side of the farm, grew tall white pine, oak, hickory, and some hemlock, which, though later removed by logging companies, linger happily in my memory.

The Herold Home

When Grandfather Herold removed to this almost wholly timbered farm in the early 1870's, he and his son Wise, using long, straight pine trees hewn flat on two sides for the interior and outside walls, built near the road a story-and-half log house about 20 feet wide and 30 feet long, with two windows below, two outside doors, a chimney with a big fireplace, and a steep stairway in one corner leading to the upper part, close under the roof and fitted with a single window. Later they built a board kitchen and dining room together on one side of the main house. For 10 years or more, while the land was being paid for, that pioneer log cabin was the home of the growing Herold family.

(Recently this log cabin was sold, dismantled, and removed to Callaghan, Virginia.)

To enlarge it, the men cut and hauled pine logs with ox teams to a primitive sawmill, then hauled the lumber 10 miles and back to a planing mill, and with the lumber added at one end of the log house two stories with six rooms, a cellar underneath, a long porch in front, and a smaller one in the rear. The log part was then camouflaged with pine boards, the new rooms finished in beautiful white pine, and the entire outside painted white with brown trimmings. A spring and well of good water were close by. That nine-room house, planned and erected from native materials by the Herolds, became my memorable boyhood home, where in one of the new rooms I had my first study, fitted out with a bed, a table, a chair, a lamp, a big closet with shelves, and later my trunk and a box bookcase.

In addition to the house there were two barns — an old one built of plain pine logs, about 20 feet square and high, with board sheds all around it for horses below and hay and other feed above; and a large frame barn, built some years later from pine lumber produced on the farm. The second barn had a central driveway for wagons and four parallel stables for feeding and sheltering cattle and sheep, and with two very large mows for hay, straw, and corn fodder, later fitted out with a track under the top of the roof for a hayfork, operated by long ropes and horses, for unloading and storing hay. Here in the winter, manure would accumulate to be removed by wagon and scattered on the grain land — an operation well designed to develop a boy's muscle and stamina and clear his head for effective study when the opportunity came without any artificial gymnastics for amusing the public.

Between the log barn and the house were a granary, two corn cribs made of pine poles, and a chicken house. To the rear of the house was a woodshed, a meathouse or smokehouse, as we called it, where father cured and pickled the meats, and an icehouse made by filling wide walls with sawdust and cutting the ice from the frozen creek in the wintertime. Also there was a large wash house and refuse place, and behind it a privy for the exclusive use of the females of the family. The men and boys were ostracized to the environs of the barns or elsewhere, and segregated solely on the basis of sex, without any pretence of providing equal and comparable facilities! The notion of installing a privy for all inside the house would then have shocked the household as the innovation of a barbarous, indecent, and lazy generation.

Though in the early days both oxen and horses were used on

the farm for motive power, before my time horses alone had taken the place of oxen, which my father knew well how to handle. Usually he would have from four to six horses and one or two colts for replacements. He would have one heavyweight team for plowing and hauling and one lighter team for riding and driving or light work. In 1914 he acquired his first automobile, keeping a private supply of gasoline since there was no filling station near us.

Besides the horses the farm carried 10 to 12 cows to produce calves and milk and butter for family use. Fifteen to 30 young cattle would be wintered, pastured through the summer, and marketed in the fall. Sheep, however, furnished the most stable source of income with the least investment, as I often heard my father remark. On an average the farm would have 150 to 200 mature sheep, which produced a crop of wool in the spring of the year and a crop of lambs in the fall, yielding a dependable cash income twice a year. Important tasks were caring for the lambs in the frosty spring time and shearing the grown sheep when the weather moderated.

How fascinating it was to watch the young lambs and young calves skipping and playing in the pastures and the long-legged colts trying to walk as if they were on stilts! And how my first-hand knowledge of sheep and lambs and herding contributed later to my appreciation and enjoyment of Wordsworth's great poem, "Michael"! As a boy, I knew an old man, Wilson Ryder, who almost perfectly impersonated the shepherd in the poem. He, like Michael, was old and patient and dependable and loyal and good beyond words to express his virtues. He, too, carrying a little salt, would range far in quest of his sheep and lambs. Because his wife was dead, he alone had to bring up a large family, aided by an older daughter who postponed her marriage for years and yet, finally, reared children of her own.

On a stock farm a boy needs no Dr. Kinsey to instruct him in the mystery and power of sex, for birds and beasts observe no Victorian inhibitions. Without any Biblical lore they know instinctively that each kind is to mate and multiply, exercising their divine prerogatives without shame or apology. So, the frogs in a pond spin a web of tadpole life, and the sparrow fags himself to satisfy his mate. In the barnyard the rooster parades his masculinity by running down and ravishing the fairest hen, which is probably thrilled to be run down and fertilized. The turkey gobbler struts and spreads his wings and feathers to flatter and entice his sweetheart. Like a four-footed Brigham Young, the big ram holds forth among his gentle ewes in the pasture.

With persevering, grunting satisfaction the boar hog creates a litter of pigs. The roaring, pawing bull renders efficient and consoling service in his cow harem. Above all, the mighty stallion, a ton of tingling passion, Shakespeare's classic example in "Venus and Adonis," braces himself and rears against the bridle in his passionate efforts to consummate his chief mission in life.

With such continuing exhibitions of sex activity among birds and beasts on a farm, is it any wonder that human creatures too should be responsive to their environment? However that may be, it is a fact that country people are more prolific than city-dwellers. In my neighborhood one could point to five families within a mile of our home where each numbered seven to ten children, making a total of 40 young people, all strong and vigorous, and propagated in due and proper form according to the accepted marriage requirements.

However, in our community were at least two Hester Prynnes, known to me years before I heard of Hawthorne's famous heroine, who reared small families in defiance of man-made restrictions but not without a certain measure of respect and obvious hardship. One named Mary brought up three husky but lazy boys, and the other named Rachel, by some called Aunt Rachel, produced a boy and a girl. Both lived in simple cabins in remote places by rigid economy and lowly services with few social advantages for the children. Mary used to wash clothes for my mother, trudging six miles a day and carrying home flour and bacon for her sons. Like Hester, too, they never revealed the name of the fathers – not so far as I ever heard! Were they secret concubines? Perhaps so! I do not know, but both appeared to find consolation in smoking a clay pipe!

Though my father grew up accustomed to all kinds of farm work, he picked up in the short-term schools a fair knowledge of the elements so that he could keep his accounts in good shape, handle his correspondence, and read considerably in the New York *Thrice-a-Week World, The Farm Journal* and *The National Stockman and Farmer.* He also provided us children with *The Youth's Companion* and *The Pocahontas Times,* which along with the *World* I enjoyed reading. Stories of elk, deer, and moose in the *Companion* were often so thrilling that they frightened me in my dreams.

In 1896 when William Jennings Bryan was campaigning on a free-silver platform for the presidency, I followed his travels and speeches in the *World* with so much interest and admiration that his defeat in November stunned and disappointed me painfully. Only eleven, I was fascinated by Bryan's dramatic win-

ning of the Democratic nomination by a single speech and his conducting a vigorous campaign, as he declared, against the intrenched money power. The next year my father, as a bondsman for the Pocahontas sheriff, was forced into bankruptcy, losing most of his property. Grandpa Ruckman rescued our family by buying and largely paying for our homeplace at a depression price of $4,500.

My mother, Kate Elizabeth Ruckman, the oldest child of her parents, was born and grew up at Mill Gap, Virginia. She remembered the closing years of the Civil War and used to tell me of the starving soldiers coming along and eating the hot, doughy bread before it was baked. She was a delicate, refined girl with a love of music and literature. As she read the newspapers and magazines, it was her practice to clip choice selections of prose and poetry and paste them in a large scrapbook, which one of my sisters keeps as a family treasure. Besides going to local and home schools, at 15 she attended the Warm Springs Female Academy for one year, and then, for a second year, Wesleyan Female Institute of Staunton, Virginia, where she won honors in English, instrumental music, and conduct. Cousin Mary writes that she was a bright, healthy, lighthearted girl, with fair skin, rich color, large blue-grey eyes and bronzy-brown hair that clustered in natural curls around her high forehead and plump white neck. When she came home from Staunton, Cousin Mary wrote, "She was a picture of girlish loveliness, fresh and sweet as a newly opened pink rose. I had really never seen her before to appraise her. She had many admirers but was not a coquette."

When she was about 18, she was afflicted with a serious mental illness that required hospitalization. Her cousin, Annie E. Callison, thought the basic cause was a hard fall she received when a baby in the care of a colored girl. She struck the back of her head so violently on a stone step that it left a "saucer-like depression" for life. She recovered from this terrible blow and the later illness so fully that her health once again seemed to be normal. Among her many admirers she chose my father, and on August 26, 1884, they were married at the Ruckman residence when she was 24 and he 27 years old.

Though they made their home in Pocahontas on the Herold farm, which my father bought, paying each of his brothers $1,000 and each of his sisters $500, Grandma Ruckman insisted that my mother should return to her care at Mill Gap for the birth of her first two children – Amos Lee on August 8, 1885, and Henry Van Meter on February 25, 1888, thus making both boys natives

of the Old Dominion rather than of that Yankee state, West Virginia. By 1900 a third son, Edgar Wilson, and four daughters – Annah Margie, Elizabeth Belle, Lulah Bryan, and Reta Lillian– had joined the family; seven children in 15 years. All of them are still living except Margie, a skillful teacher and a popular young woman, who died from the effects of a surgical operation in 1918 and was laid to rest beside her mother and paternal grandparents on the home place beneath whispering young pine trees.

Though my mother made a complete recovery from her mental illness and had fairly good health while bearing seven vigorous children, yet as the family responsibilities grew and my father went through a bankruptcy necessitating unusual economies, her health slowly weakened and her nerves showed the strain in spite of many medical efforts to conserve her resources. While my youngest sister Reta was still a baby, my poor mother was afflicted with a second mental collapse so that for nearly ten years she was an invalid, sometimes at home in a sad, melancholy, and nearly helpless condition but mostly in a state institution for better medical care and the safety of herself and the family. Late in her checkered life, my brother Henry and I made a train trip to see her at Spencer, West Virginia, but she never recovered. Only death in 1909 could bring her perpetual rest and peace. Her tragic illness and separation from her children long shadowed my own life and future, because such an illness is the tragedy of tragedies.

My very earliest recollections are about the fact and mystery of death. I recall clearly, though only three years old then, the illness and death of Grandma Herold in the summer of 1888, and I clearly remember attending the funeral and burial of Uncle Sammy Ruckman, a promising young student, in the fall of the next year. No small part of my life and study has been directed toward trying to find a satisfactory solution for the mystery of human life and death. For the present I cannot do better than to quote some fine lines that Cousin Mary wrote on this theme called "The Dead":

I sleep here tranquil; let me lie
Beneath the broad protecting sky.
Let ages in their march go by,
I lie here resting. Let me lie.

I lie here dreaming -- let me rest.
How sweet to me the brown earth's breast!
Behind me legends of my best;
I lie here dreaming – I am blest.

I lie here silent, soon forgot,
The place I filled, 'twill know me not.
Unsought, unknown my resting spot.
I lie here sleeping — long forgot,
Regretting naught. Disturb me not.

Like Bryant in "Thanatopsis," she is unconcerned with the terrors of a mythical Hell or the bliss of a mythical Heaven. She accepts death as life with calm composure and serenity, resting and dreaming, regretting nothing and leaving behind her "legends of my best." What a memorable line is that, as well as the whole poem, so fitting for a memorial inscription!

I CHOSE TEACHING
Part II. The Pursuit of Happiness

CHAPTER 4
Early Schooling

MY FORMAL schooling began at the age of five or six at Mill Gap, Virginia, where for a few months I lived with my Ruckman kinfolk and attended a nearby school with three of the younger Ruckman children who were still in their teens – Uncle Glenn and Aunts Margie and Sarah. We walked to the new schoolhouse, called the Hall, taught by a lady. I recall that the older students sometimes amused themselves by dancing in the old schoolhouse. Vividly do I remember my new copper-toed boots that I wore to school and used for wading in the little creek contrary to my grandmother's prohibitions. At school I studied a little and observed much, watching the big boys and girls flirting with each other behind their upheld, open books. Already they were attracting each other like powerful magnets. The teacher was thoughtfully kind to two of us tired little boys, because she would often in fair weather let us go outside to play during school hours. Occasionally I would be alone to gaze at the mysterious timbered hills and the floating clouds and the blue sky, and to wonder what all the mighty world meant and to glimpse the glory and the mystery of life.

Returning to Pocahontas on horseback behind my father, I rejoined the Herolds and lived in the beautiful valley of Knapp's Creek, a large branch of the Greenbrier River, with its source on the west side of Paddy's Knob about eight miles away. At our house in the valley the morning sun came up over the top of the Allegheny Mountain about two miles due east and always shone on the western hill tops for almost an hour before it reached the valley, and in the evening the sun disappeared behind the hills long before it really set.

Though the mountains at our home, being relatively to the valley lower or farther away, appeared less impressive than at Mill Gap in Highland, they were memorably beautiful at all seasons of the year, especially in the springtime when the dogwood and honeysuckle bloomed and in the autumn when the frosts produced a riot of colored leaves ranging through the spectrum from red to violet. There were all possible combinations – as the golden and pink yellow of maple leaves against a background of green pines or hemlock and the blue sky, deep reds and browns and pinks and greens, all changing from day to day in an ecstatic farewell to the mothering trees. How could one ever forget them in all the glory of their farewell recessional! But with late fall and winter came bare trees and snow and ice and cold. On many a morning we shivered at the daily chores and as we trudged along the roads to school. The coldest was the clear morning when the Fahrenheit thermometer dropped to 40 degrees below zero, the lowest I have ever experienced! That morning the air was perfectly still as if it, too, was frozen, and from the forest one could hear the trees cracking from the extremity of cold! On that memorable occasion we abbreviated the chores and sought the fireside till Old Sol could somewhat appease the Cold Dragon.

At the Herold home I grew up with a large family of nine to ten consisting of my parents, my brother Henry, and sister Margie, and my aunts and uncles – Nora, Lula, Nina, Homer, Bedford, and Penic, to name them in the order of birth. Aunt Lula soon met and married a singing master from the Valley of Virginia, Thomas Miller, who honeymooned to the West, became an insurance executive with headquarters in Indianapolis, lived and died there; the widow lingering for several years, but joining him there in death – a perfect love match, so far as I know, without children.

Uncle Homer, always kind and helpful, made a good mechanic's record in Uncle Russell's farm-implement department. But he never married, became restless, unsettled, and sometimes intemperate, and, like some other Herolds, he loved to ramble about the world and enjoy its variety, doing odd jobs for his livelihood. On his last visit in my home I succeeded in getting him to tell me the story of his life, which I wrote down. He had been to England and all over the United States. Once in Nevada, overtaken by night in a remote region, he was pursued for hours by a panther. Badly frightened, he continued his way on foot, expecting to be attacked and killed at any time, but to his surprise and relief the animal finally slipped away and left him un-

molested. Years later, when the wanderer died in hospitable New York City, Uncle Penic had his body sent to Kiowa, Kansas, for burial beside his brother Russell.

Playmates and Work

On the farm Uncle Penic, my senior by only five years, became my playmate and buddy, and through the years we have kept in touch with each other by visits and letters. He and I have always had much in common though he turned to business and followed his brothers and sisters to Kansas in 1896. In Anthony he became a successful banker, versatile businessman, and community leader of civic projects. Considerate and generous, he is also a mainstay of his many friends and relatives. Sometimes, he laughingly recalls his boyish prank of enticing me one time into trying to eat an Indian turnip, notoriously hot and peppery, as I soon learned once and for all time!

By 1896 all my Herold aunts and uncles, except Aunt Allie Moore and her husband Newton, had gone West to settle or join Uncle Russell, the leader, in south Kansas, where he conducted a large and successful mercantile business at Kiowa and could give several of them employment. After Uncle Russell's early death in 1902, Uncle Bedford became a grain and stock farmer at Byron, Oklahoma; Aunt Nora lived and died a very good and useful woman; Aunt Nina Myrtle married Wilbur F. Dean and lived in Wichita. She had been an inspiration to me before she left our home, because she was gifted at singing and playing the organ. With ballads and songs she so well-nigh hypnotized me, that, when she began to sing, I would run from my play to enjoy the songs — some sad like "Camping on the Old Camp Ground" and "My Old Kentucky Home," but some gay and lively like "The Little Black Mustache," which she sang charmingly. Indeed, having sipped the Fountain of Youth, she has always been the personification of youth and liveliness.

Among the neighborhood children my two best friends were Roy and Peyton Moore, sons of Isaac Brown Moore, and direct descendants of the famous Moses, who lived on part of the ancestral estate. Cousin Brown was a prominent Mason, a youthful teacher, a farmer (not a very good one, my father said), a lover, and a minor politician, serving one term in the state legislature. He was a good and popular citizen, and for some years a sort of model for me. Yes, he was a successful lover in that he married three times and reared or started three sets of children, ten in all. I can never forget how grieved and broken this

family was when death took his first wife, leaving eight motherless children, my friends and playmates.

On the farm I learned to do all kinds of work — planting, cultivating, and harvesting; making a garden; caring for the sheep, horses, and cattle; suckling the greedy calves and milking the cows; butchering chickens, hogs, sheep, and an occasional beef for winter meat; cutting brush in the pastures, building and repairing fences, and repainting buildings. For the table we had plenty of substantial foods, such as meat, bread, milk (though I drank little till later years), butter, eggs, fruits usually, vegetables, and berries; but few dainties, for we bought only coffee, tea, sugar, and spices. Plenty of work in the outdoors made healthy appetites and prevented insomnia at night.

For several years my brother Henry and I, ten years of age and upward, did all the milking that was not done by the calves. Each of us had certain named cows to milk. Being the older, I agreed to milk the more difficult cows. So, it fell to my lot to milk a certain husky, brindled female called Lizzie, which had sensitive teats that required strong pressure to extract the milk. One approached her with fear and trembling, because on occasion she could kick viciously, dispersing bucket and milker with hard and painful blows, as I learned from experience. She never became docile; she was ever a problem cow to be handled with care and discretion. Finally, she was fattened and much to my relief marketed. I think she taught me to be patient, cautious, and circumspect! Is not the world full of many kinds of kicking cows — employers, officials, cunning salesmen, and tricky politicians, who seem to enjoy upsetting one's bucket of milk?

Many a long hot day I spent making hay or harvesting wheat or corn, sawing wood, or cutting the immortal brush in the pastures. By the age of 12 I could do the work of a grown man, and I was so proud of this distinction that I paid little attention to friendly observers who cautioned me not to overwork. To be sure, I was thin and lean but tough and hardy. In those early days I acquired the fiber and strength and health that have sustained me through 70 years and that sustain me now with good prospects for the future. An early course in physiology and hygiene indelibly impressed upon me the unwisdom of dissipating my energies or injuring my health with liquor, beer, or tobacco in any form. Though my father used tobacco, he put a positive prohibition on it for us boys, saying that it was a filthy, expensive habit. All three of his sons followed his advice. Nor have pernicious and dissolute women ever had any appeal for me, nor can I understand why any sensible man should pay any attention

to them. An early reading of the Bible warned me against the wiles of the strange woman.

Boyish Adventures

I recall an episode with wild turkeys. One time my father came home from the Allegheny with six or eight wild turkey eggs he had found in the woods. Instead of eating them, we decided to try the experiment of placing them under a setting chicken hen to hatch and bring up. In due time the eggs hatched and the hen and little turkeys were put in a coop and cared for attentively, and all went well as the turkeys grew and began to feather. In a few weeks they were released to roam the farm with the mothering hen – tall, gangling, and feathered. One afternoon I had to go to the far side of the farm to bring them to the barnyard. Already they had shown signs of skittishness and they were learning to fly upon and over fences. On this particular day I became annoyed and tried to shoo them faster along homeward. Presently, to my great surprise, one or two began to run and to get on their wings like an airplane and the others followed, leaving me and the hen deserted in the field! Those young flyers kept going straight to the woods about a quarter of a mile away, where they came down among the young pines and disappeared. That ended our attempt to domesticate wild turkeys. Once later, while hunting squirrels, I chanced upon a flock of wild turkeys and, concealing myself behind a cluster of bushes and waiting a few minutes, I shot a 10-pound hen as she stuck her head up over a fallen tree. On another occasion I succeeded in killing my second and last wild turkey.

In avoiding the dangers connected with farm life, I was quite fortunate though I received several bad scares. Beginning with a board to support myself in the water, I soon learned to swim with confidence in the creek that flowed through the farm. One time, however when my younger brother, Edgar, and I were bathing and swimming stark naked in a deep blue pool about 50 feet in diameter, Edgar, in crossing the deepest part, became confused by a false bottom and went down calling frantically for help. Since I was upstream in shallow water at the time, I ran and swam toward him. I was careful not to let him catch hold of me and by holding with one hand to a long willow branch and reaching out with the other, I succeeded in catching him by the hair and pulling him to shallow water. He took to his heels and fairly shot up over a low bank so comically that I had to laugh though a few seconds before he was in grave danger of drowning. Some time later when I was trying to improve his

swimming, I accidentally let his mouth get full of water and he came up spouting it like a young whale. Again I could not refrain from laughing with the result that he became angry and threatened to rock me for purposely letting him sink, though in a few moments he accepted my explanation that his sinking was wholly accidental.

While I was a small boy living on Knapp's Creek, I acquired a wholesome respect for panthers, ghosts, and rattlesnakes. When the neighbors got together, especially on a dark night, they sometimes engaged in a kind of story-telling contest well fitted to make boys wish to stay indoors till broad daylight.

Though I myself did not then see or hear any panthers, I heard a number of trustworthy stories about them so that I had no desire to meet one. But my playmate, Roy Moore, told of seeing one in the winter when he, with two dogs, went to a remote barn to milk the cows and feed the cattle. When he had finished these chores and was leaving the barn, he noticed his dogs were greatly disturbed and fearfully whining. Looking around, about 300 feet away he saw on a bank across and above the road a giant dog, as he first supposed, about five feet long and three feet tall, with a long tail. He said it was as tall as a calf and it stood there with side to him calmly looking across the meadow and watching him and his frightened dogs; but, apparently not hungry, it moved gracefully and majestically into the white pine bushes and disappeared. Since Roy had seen wildcats, he was positive that this animal was a panther, cougar, or mountain lion. About the same time and three miles down the valley two men walking along the road one night heard and saw a similar animal, which they cunningly distracted from themselves by striking and burning matches till they reached a safe distance from the panther.

Though ghosts were always reported to be harmless, bodiless phenomena, I was then fearful of them, especially in the vicinity of graveyards, under the spell of the ghost stories I had heard. One time, aged about ten, when I was returning home at dusk from hauling hay shocks for a neighbor along the highway near where Roy had seen the panther, I was thoroughly frightened by a fearful thing ahead of me that looked like a ghostly octopus ready to seize me with its ghostly tentacles. My body shivered, my hair stood on end, and my heart nearly stopped, but I stood my ground and presently I recognized the fearful thing to be the long white roots of a large, fallen pine tree!

The most startling frights were caused by rattlesnakes, for they have a fearful rattle and a poisonous bite, sometimes killing

people or frightening them nearly to death. One fine June day when I was ten years old, I was alone on a far side of the farm hunting and picking a few wild strawberries. As I was crouching along in the grass on a slight slope, eagerly picking the luscious berries, suddenly close in front of me a coiled snake rattled his warning and scared me as never before or afterward. I sprang back quickly and fled as if the Indians were on my trail and trying to scalp me. I have always felt very grateful to that rattler, because I am sure that he might have struck me directly in the face, since between his head and mine there were only four or five feet, which he easily could have jumped. On a later occasion, while picking huckleberries on the Allegheny Mountain, I crouched opposite the end of a hollow log in which lay a rattler that could probably have bitten me. Instead he acted like a good sport and gave me warning. Still again, while we were repairing a piece of fence and carrying rails back and forth under the trees, I walked directly over a rattler that warned without striking. Finally, to add one more adventure, one time when I was sitting on our low front porch and reading, I chanced to look up and saw a yellow rattler crawling toward a screened door. Though he did not endanger me, I soon put an end to his prowling and spying around the house. One of our dogs, having been bitten, developed a fierce mania for hunting and killing rattlers. Finding one in a pile of brush or logs, he would lay siege to the hideout, barking and digging furiously for hours at a time. Though he may have gotten a few scalps, in the end I think they succeeded in killing him, for he disappeared.

While escaping these and other natural dangers to life, I experienced the usual childhood maladies, such as whooping cough, two kinds of measles, and many severe colds and sore throats accompanied by hard and sometimes prolonged coughing. Once a cold grew into pneumonia and I was put to bed in the care of a local physician, who, finding the malady affected only one lung, succeeded after a week or more in restoring me to normal health.

The Moore School

Between the ages of six and seventeen, when I began to teach in the public elementary schools of West Virginia, I received a total of about 50 months of elementary instruction, which was fully 40 per cent less than the modern allotment of 80 to 100 months for the same age span. At first a term had only four months in a year and later five months. While I was small, I attended regularly, but after the age of 12 in the fall or spring I might be detained at home to help harvest or plant the crops a

part or even all of one month, which by special effort I made up and continued with my classes.

The Moore schoolhouse, which was about 18 by 30 feet and built of pine lumber, had been placed originally on a suitable dry site, but a change in the public road occasioned its removal across the valley to a flat spot in a poorly drained pasture so that in wet weather teacher and pupils found water and mud all around the schoolhouse with no attempt at better drainage. Fortunately, most of the time the place was either dry or frozen. Of course, the highways were no better, and mud and water were accepted as part of the equipment for training boys and girls. The bare, lonely schoolhouse was fitted out with strong pine desks for two pupils each, one table and chair for the teacher, a large iron stove for burning wood, one door, four windows, a blackboard, two long benches, a water bucket and dipper, and a monstrous-looking Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary,* which like an oracle resolved many questions and mysteries and which I reverenced next to the Bible.

All in all, I was fortunate in my teachers, five women and one man. After my initial school experience at Mill Gap, I came under the efficient instruction of Miss Rella F. Clark for two or three terms in succession. She was strict in discipline, setting goals that must be achieved and accepting no flimsy excuses. On one occasion during school hours I became so curious to investigate a disturbance outside the open door that I left my seat to peep outside at a passerby. When she saw me out of my seat, she sharply directed me to go outside and get a good look! That reprimand completely cured my spying and peeping. Under her guidance I made good progress and received commendable grades. My Cousin Myrta Herold was almost as good, besides being young and beautiful—a perfect blonde and a lovely woman, who married Price Moore and after his untimely death reared their children, an unsung heroine. My best teacher was probably Mr. John H. Lantz, a well-qualified and energetic instructor and a former superintendent of county schools, who had me in hand for two or three terms at the end of my grade-school work. In fact, some of his instruction in arithmetic, English, and physical geography was of high-school caliber. In these advanced classes Roy Moore and I were the leaders, seeking in a friendly way to surpass each other. In particular, I recall that the teacher used to give us a little printed card about once a week with four or five arithmetical problems to be solved. How we worked to prove our solutions in order to get a perfect or nearly perfect score!

Twice later in the teacher's arithmetic examination I received perfect scores — 100 per cent!

Usually there were 10 to 30 pupils with one teacher, who taught all the needed subjects quite well, combining the closely related grades and giving much individual attention to beginners and the trailers, and thus disproving much of the later criticism directed at the one-room school. In the early morning, the children would walk one or two miles to school, carrying their noon lunches. After four o'clock they would return home, talking and playing on the way. By choice, not compulsion, the boys and girls usually played separately. The boys delighted in ball games called "roly-poly" and "antony-over," in skating on the ice without skates, sliding down the hills on boards, and in snowballing one another.

One morning before school began I remember that five or six of us carried a long wide board to the top of a sleet-covered hill with a rail fence near its base. As the engineer I got in front with the other boys behind me and we pushed off. Usually we could control the speed with our heels, but that morning our heels would not dig into the sleet. Seeing nothing but disaster before us, I shouted to the boys behind to roll off, but I stuck to the board and with uplifted feet the board and I crashed into the fence and knocked it over. The amateur engineer received several scratches but no broken bones or bad cuts, thanks to the speedy response of the other boys to his shouted orders.

When Mr. Lantz was teaching, we took spiteful pleasure in getting him in the ball games with a view to warming up his posterior anatomy, as indeed we liked to burn each other with wet balls! Halfway home and near the highway a few of us had a secret shady spot in the edge of the woods where we used to practice "speeches" and other vocal exercises — an early glimpse of later professorial practices.

I enjoyed these school days, the games, the spelling matches, and the associations with my teachers and fellow students; and I suppose that I made fair progress in my studies. Reading and orthography were easy; I enjoyed American history — especially the stories of American heroes and leaders — geography, government, physiology, hygiene, and arithmetic. At first, long division was a mystery of mysteries. How many times will 969 divide into 464,752? How should I know? My later explanation or rationalization was that I had tackled long division too early. I could not grasp it readily till I was somewhat older. Just how well or poorly I had done the elementary courses will appear when we examine

the results of my first teacher's examination on 13 subjects, taken a few days after my 17th birthday in August, 1902.

Quite early I acquired a marvelous power of concentration, so that nothing disturbed me when I became interested in reading or trying to solve a problem. At home the other children's playing and talking did not disturb or distract me. The family might even call me by name without my taking notice or responding. At first my mother was inclined to be alarmed, thinking that I might be losing my hearing or might otherwise be abnormal. Well, the fact was that I could concentrate and become isolated in an imaginary or purely mental world. The gift enabled me to accomplish much more in less time than I could have done otherwise, but, as the years passed, this power waned considerably though I can still concentrate under favorable conditions. In the spring and summer of 1902 in preparation for a teacher's examination, I absorbed Myers' *General History* in this effective and enriching manner, for no novel was ever more interesting and exciting than the exploits and accomplishments of the Greeks and Romans as revealed or re-enacted before my eyes. The gaining of knowledge and wisdom was fast becoming my lifelong pursuit of happiness.

Along with this gift of mental concentration I associate rainy days when I could use the gift freely. On such days we stayed at home, and father usually exempted me from special chores about the house or barns that he might want done. In consequence, I always regarded a wet season, rainy days, as a blessing when I could indulge my taste for reading books, magazines, and newspapers, or study for a teacher's examination. My sincerest thanks to the wet seasons and the rainy days!

Juvenile Dreamer

I suppose that every child passes through a period of life when imagination is more active and potent than reason. So, it was with me. The age of ten to twenty or later was my chief period of juvenile dreaming – trying to formulate my future life, my career, in a vague, uncertain, and insecure manner.

In 1896, under the spell of William Jennings Bryan, I had visions of becoming an orator or public speaker and politician in imitation of the Great Commoner. This dream had the effect of intensifying my interest in history, government, and speeches, of leading to participation in the discussion of state and national issues, and finally, as a stunt and opportunity to speak, of my once seeking in Missouri a nomination to Congress.

In 1899, at the age of fourteen, while on a trip with Benjamin

Sharp by wagon to Hot Springs, Virginia, to get supplies from the railway there, I happened to meet a vivacious young woman somewhat older than I was, who caught my fancy, fired my imagination, and set me dreaming the dreams of an infatuated boy lover. Though I did not see this charmer again for several years, she was much in my mind and I made visionary plans of my life with her on a certain piece of farm land where I hoped to build a house and barn and proceed to the business of rearing a family. Such was the beautiful vision, which was shattered a few years later by a second view of the princess, who had become the frowzy, unglamorous wife of another man! So, farewell to that youthful dream.

My third and most persistent dream was that of becoming a Presbyterian preacher and reforming the world, like a Luther or a Moody. This boyish dream and ambition began about 1900 with my "conversion" and joining the Presbyterian Church under the evangelism of Rev. G. W. Nickell, a vigorous pastor of the Marlinton, Huntersville, and Westminster Churches for several years, succeeding my boyhood venerated pastor, Rev. William T. Price, an honor graduate of Washington and Lee, who, loving truth and goodness, always practiced what he preached. This preacher dream lasted about ten years and greatly influenced my plans, purposes, and studies while it possessed my mind.

CHAPTER 5

Teaching and Learning

HOWEVER much I might be dreaming of my future in daytime or nightly solitude, at the age of sixteen, I decided to become a public schoolteacher as the best immediate means of living and gratifying my ambition to learn. I declined the offer of a friendly merchant to clerk in his local store, which would have, perhaps, led me into a mercantile career like that of Uncle Russell, who fitted himself for this work, by taking a short course in a Baltimore business college. Already I had started as a teacher in the local Sunday School.

So, for one more term under former Superintendent Lantz I continued my schooling in the home grade school, where fully half of my studies were of high-school rank. My friend, Roy Moore, and I did advanced arithmetic, physical geography, and

composition-literature in addition to courses of lower grade. Following this term I planned to read and study general history without the aid of an instructor in preparation for a county teachers' examination the next summer.

Teacher's Certificate.

To qualify as an elementary teacher, I must pass successfully in 13 subjects — 12 taught in the grades and one professional requirement, the theory and art of teaching, which for me was such a *terra incognita* that my grade in it on three examinations was uniformly low, much to my disappointment but without preventing my success. In preparation for this gauntlet adventure — this two-day written test of my knowledge of 13 subjects — I reviewed and studied diligently in spare time and at night while working on the farm. For several weeks Myers' *General History* held me spellbound as the author skillfully and for the first time revealed to me the ancient pagan world. I relived the Greek, Roman, and later European life record so truly and made such brief factual notes, hitting upon mnemonic devices such as a boy of 12 years led the Children's Crusade of 1212, that I surprised the examiners and myself by getting a grade of 98 per cent. My study of numbers yielded me 85 in arithmetic and 100 in bookkeeping. I did well in the history of the United States and of West Virginia, in civil governments, geography, physiology, hygiene, and orthography. But owing to some technical questions, I was lower in English grammar and the art of teaching, as I might have anticipated.

Though only seventeen years of age and with only grade-school training, I succeeded in passing all 13 subjects with an average grade of ~~99 5/7~~ per cent. Accordingly, the three examiners, County Superintendent James W. Warwick, T. A. Bruffey, and T. D. Moore, on August 14, 1902, issued me a Second Grade Certificate effective for two years and affirmed that I was a "person of good moral character and competent to teach and govern a common school." Of this competency I was not so confident.

My success in running this gauntlet lined by 13 well-armed old squaws, fitted out by three scalping experts, was as gratifying and stimulating to me as was Moses Moore's adventure with ignorance or my own success many years later in passing a preliminary, oral, two-hour inquisition by four scholars for a doctoral degree at Columbia University. I had proved to myself and others that I could do the job, and I was within less than three per cent of a First Grade Teacher's Certificate! Though a Second

Grade then paid only $25 a month and a First Grade only $30, the purchasing power of a dollar was three to five times greater than in 1950.

Thus equipped with a teaching certificate and looking sober but youthful, I next sought to find and contract for a school with a local board of trustees. So I inquired about vacant schools, wishing to get away from my home community. Mounted on one of our riding horses, I set out, like a knight seeking adventure, on a little pilgrimage to a remote district of the county, but trustees were wisely wary of my youth and inexperience and I, too, was wary of big, troublesome schools. Within a week, however, I contracted to teach a five-month term at the Thorny Creek School, which was about five miles from my home by the highway, though only three miles as I used to walk the distance on week-ends by a direct route across wooded hills and fenced pastures.

By starting my school early in September and teaching a few Saturdays and holidays, I could complete the required 100 school days in less than five calendar months. Then, I could either teach a second school elsewhere or attend a high school for half a year. At that time high schools were excessively scarce in West Virginia, especially in the Happy Hunting Land. Upon inquiring, I learned that my best plan would be to seek admission for the second term at the Greenbrier Presbyterial School, just started at Lewisburg, West Virginia, about 60 miles away by hack and train.

My First School

At the appointed time I opened the grade school at Thorny Creek with five little girls and nine or ten boys in attendance. Most of the children were quite young and shy. Two boys were in the upper grades and did such good work that they later became teachers, and two others were ranked somewhat lower. I organized the various small classes, and began instruction in the manner that I had often observed my own teachers practicing. One older boy with a bad reputation for misconduct at school did not appear the first day. For several weeks I dreaded his coming and almost prayed that the Lord would deliver me from him. Fortunately for me and perhaps for him, too, he did not enroll, and his reputation slowly faded from my mind except as I now recall it.

Situated at a crossroads and the edge of a forest, the school building was a new, single-room, frame structure painted white, with one door, six windows, a large wood-burning stove, a black-

board, a teacher's chair and table, two recitation benches, about a dozen new double-seated desks for the children, and a dictionary. A conspicuous novelty was a many-leaved chart mounted on a tripod and called "The New Education" prepared by the Diamond Publishing Company and advertised to be the *sine qua non* of a modern schoolroom though in spite of all my efforts I was not able to do much with it except to show the colored leaves and figures for the amusement or puzzlement of the younger children. It seemed to me that a smooth-tongued salesman had wheedled our unprofessional school leaders into a questionable expenditure, which might much better have gone toward starting a school library.

Astonishing as this statement may be, I was able to obtain room and board with one of the trustees, Mr. H. D. Hively, a former teacher now turned farmer, for $5 a month, excluding week-ends when I usually walked home to work on Saturday and spend Sunday there, returning to my school early Monday morning. Mr. and Mrs. Hively, with five children attending my school, were living in an old two-story log house with a frame dining room and kitchen attached. It was situated on a green slope near a fine spring at the base of Michael Mountain, a few miles west of the main Allegheny and a resort for deer, bears, and panthers. Within a year a new frame house replaced the log house. Mr. Hively had picked up a few books including the *Life of David Crockett by Himself,* which, with youthful trust in the veracity of publishers and authors, I read with much pleasure. Mrs. Hively, aided by her two young daughters, provided excellent foods, mostly produced on the farm — choice meats, eggs, chickens, luscious melons, fresh corn and potatoes, fruits and berries, and dairy dishes. The family was of German descent and characteristically friendly, industrious, saving, and respected.

Thus reading and observing, I began to teach in order to save a little money from a five-month total of $125, with which to continue my high-school studies, already begun in the grade school under Mr. Lantz. From that time onward to the present, I have truly been a composite student-teacher. That is, I studied to teach and I taught to learn again, and so, learning and teaching, teaching and learning, I have, from boyhood to old age, served my pupils and have always sought knowledge and wisdom for them and myself. And in writing this book of recollections, I am eager to continue my work now and hereafter and to induce others to seek the happiness conferred by knowledge and wisdom, temperance and art.

One notable fact about my schooling experience is that under the pressure of necessity, rather than from choice, I succeeded in abbreviating the time usually allotted for the completion of the various steps or stages in education. For example, I finished the grade school or elementary subjects in about 50 months instead of the customary 80 to 100 months, as shown by my passing an elementary teachers' examination. Next, in doing the high-school work, I would teach from September to January in a grade school. Then, entering high school at midyear, I would, by strenuous efforts, catch up with the regular classes and finish with them by June. Of course, while teaching, I was also studying and learning in preparation for my return to high school. This procedure I followed for three successive years and in about 20 months I completed high-school work that usually requires 30 to 36 months. In like manner, I earned the bachelor's degree in three nine-month sessions instead of the customary four years, winning a Greek scholarship in my second year and working for pay during the summer vacations.

As already mentioned, for high-school instruction I turned to Greenbrier Presbyterial School, newly organized for boys at Lewisburg, West Virginia, the oldest and most cultured town in the Greenbrier Valley and named for Washington's friend, General Andrew Lewis. While teaching, I got in touch with its principal, Rev. Matthew L. Lacy, D. D., a retired Presbyterian preacher and one of the best men I have ever known, to whom I am deeply indebted for aid and encouragement in my efforts to get an education. In response to my letter explaining my ambition, plans, and restricted means, Dr. Lacy wrote me with his own hand from Lewisburg, on January 13, 1903, as follows:

Dear Sir,

Your letter came today. I make you the best offer I can afford. You may come the four remaining months Feb. March April and May for *fifty dollars* so far as *my charges* are concerned. That is I will charge you no tuition and reduce board from fifteen to about twelve dollars. You would have to get your own books. I do not know beforehand what they would be, and can not tell what they would cost. You also pay for your own washing, about 1.25 a month at the highest, possibly a good deal lower. You will have to bring your own bedclothing, one pair of sheets two pillow cases and pair of blankets or quilts.

These are your own and you can take them with you. I wish I could do more but my school is not paying expenses this year. I am losing money, but will continue to make this offer to you.

I hope it will suit you to come as soon as you can, and we will do all in our power for your comfort and improvement. The first half-session ends the middle of this month, but this makes no difference.

We are laboring very hard to build up a school for the Presbytery and want all the help our friends can give us. We are not sectarian at all but are more convinced of the necessity of Christian schools.

Hoping to hear from you soon
I am yours most truly,
M. L. Lacy.

When I arrived at Lewisburg ten days after receiving this letter, I found a school with forty boys, mostly local, well housed on the second and third floors of the school building, and taught by Dr. Lacy and Mr. John L. Daniel, who later abandoned the classical languages to become a college professor of chemistry. Both were well qualified and competent instructors. The curriculum called for the standard four years of study, with emphasis upon the Bible, English, Latin, mathematics, history, elementary science including astronomy, two years each of French and German, and a little Greek.

Being granted credit for half of the freshman course, I registered for a repeater class in first-year Latin, English grammar, Bible, beginning algebra, psychology, general history, and spelling. Apart from physical exercise, I set to work for 10 to 12 hours a day. I knew how to study and I could concentrate. My retained manuscripts of themes and examinations show that I could spell my own vocabulary and write clear, respectable English. I knew what I wanted and why I had come to the school. I was in good health and not concerned about any fair lady. At the end of March, April, and May I received favorable reports, and on final examinations my grades ranged from 92 in algebra to 98 in English and averaged 95 per cent. In spite of serious handicaps I had done the job and had won Dr. Lacy's confidence and approval.

One special activity at the school was the Lacy Literary Society, which met every Friday afternoon for practice in debating, declaiming, English composition, orations, and select readings; the programs being prepared by the principal and announced one week in advance. With Conrad Skaggs as my debating partner I

first appeared before the society on March 6, 1903, presenting the negative of the question, "Resolved, That the United States was right in taking possession of the Philippines." My part filled six pages of a composition book. One sentence shows a bit of original diction: "This foreign policy of our country has many drawbacks but very few go-forwards." Referring to the Philippine rebellion against us, I said, "We have stuck our fingers into a hornet's nest." Again: "Though we be the richest nation on the face of the globe, we will become the poorest of them all, unless we attend to our affairs and let the business of other people alone." Though we lost this debate, I helped to win two later.

Thus I completed my first term at the Greenbrier Presbyterial School, where I had spent four pleasant and beneficial months and made some good friends among the students, my instructors, and in town. I was no longer a stranger in Lewisburg. At the Lewisburg Female Seminary I had attended receptions and recitals of stimulating interest and value, and at the Old Stone Presbyterian Church I had heard many scholarly and helpful sermons. In town I liked the shops and stores even though I had little to spend. I loved to browse around in the local bookstore, a luxury unknown in Pocahontas County. About June the first I returned to my home.

My Diary

In my composition book following the three debates referred to previously, I began during the following summer to keep a diary, which I continued for practice in writing for nearly two years. After a few introductory pages on my parents, my birth, and my dilatoriness in starting the diary, which I promised myself to keep faithfully and honestly and to prefix to it an account of my early schooling and religious experiences, I made this record for July 13, 1903:

"I notice at once that the unlucky number 13 is before me, but as I am not the least bit superstitious I will proceed with my diary, and may the blessing of God rest upon me. Today was cold and wet, and I was laughed at by my oldest sister (Margie), because I built a big fire in the sitting room, where I desired to study Latin and read the newspapers. I received a letter from my grandpa Ruckman and from the Supt. of the Spencer Hospital for the Insane. My poor mother was not any better, but remaining in the same melancholy condition. Grandpa said that he was very busy shipping lambs. It cleared off at noon and Henry, Edgar and myself spent the evening cutting 'sprouts' – young brush. I close the day by beginning this diary and in

writing the outline of an essay which I am going to read before the Teachers' Institute in the beginning of next month."

During this period of my life I had a dreadful, almost superstitious, sense of religious faith and responsibility inculcated by the preachers and my own reading of the Bible and evangelical literature. I sincerely accepted and believed all of the Presbyterian doctrines without question and on Sunday I would read only the Bible and other religious matter. I had memorized the Shorter Catechism as the last word on theology and on occasion I could rattle it off verbatim. The following passage on my mother from the preface to my diary reveals my mood and sentiments as of September 16, 1903:

"Mother! yes mother first, and mother last. She is the beginning and end of all that I am or may be. She is the Alpha and Omega of my life. My heart appears to melt within me at the mention of her sweet name.

"O Heavenly Father, wilt thou not be pleased, in thy providence, to restore her again to her children, and clothed in her natural state of mind. May this be my prayer until her health is restored or until the angel of Death shall carry her spirit to the bosom of Jesus.

"I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen."

But the ruthless laws of nature prevailed without any divine interference or amelioration, and six years later my mother succumbed to her tragic malady.

In July, Dr. M. L. Lacy visited my home while soliciting for more students. I was hopeful that Grandpa Ruckman would be so benevolent as to send me to school the following year, and at my request Dr. Lacy wrote him in my behalf without getting a reply. That very day, July 17, I thus philosophized in my diary: "Perhaps it will be better for me, to teach and work my own way through college." Though Grandpa said or wrote nothing specific to me, I think he had a low opinion of my zealous ambition to become a preacher, for he seems to have shared some of his own father Samuel's views of this profession. Within ten years I reversed myself and returned to the rational, realistic opinions of my Ruckman ancestors for reasons to be given later in this record.

In June, I had reviewed for and taken the first state-supervised, uniform examination for teachers, trying to win a First Grade Teacher's Certificate. For several weeks I was on tenterhooks to learn the results of running this educational gauntlet sponsored by state leaders. Finally, on July 31, I was notified of receiving a Second Grade Certificate effective for three years,

my average grade being slightly higher than in the earlier county examination and less than two per cent short of the 90 required for the top honor.

First Grade Certificate

A third examination was announced for September 10 and 11, and after attending the Teachers' Institute of Pocahontas County for a week in early August, I decided to review for one month and try this third of the state tests, which were so much more rigorous in content and grading than the county examinations had been that some experienced teachers failed to pass and in the autumn many schools were without teachers.

On September the first, I began my second term of the Thorny Creek School. My experiences were not nearly so trying as last year. For an introductory talk to the students I had prepared a 10-point, sentence outline, in which No. 8 was, "Write, describe, define, and tell origin of my motto, 'Do Right'." After talking 30 minutes I read a Scripture lesson and repeated the Lord's Prayer. Then I organized the classes and began the work of instruction according to my program.

Ten days later six applicants appeared in Marlinton for the third state examination for teachers. Driving 17 miles in a buggy, I arrived on the gauntlet scene by 8:30 A.M. A three-member county board supervised the test, but sent all papers to Charleston for grading. On the first day we faced a line of six subjects and on the second seven. At the end my diary records: "It was dark before I finished this evening. I stayed with Mr. Frank Hamilton, a merchant, tonight. He directed me to my room, where I found a book entitled *The Life and Works of D. L. Moody,* which I read until nearly midnight." What tireless energy after two long, strenuous days in the examination!

Here for a 12-day period I made no record in my diary till later, so busy was I preparing for the tests and so eager to obtain a coveted First Grade effective for five years with permission to renew it for another five and carrying an automatic increase in salary. My record for Sunday, September 20, shows the nature lover: "Today was one of the calmest, serenest, clearest, and (most) awe-inspiring days that I have ever witnessed. My whole spirit within me seemed to chuckle with gladness which I have witnessed before, but never have I felt it in such a high degree. I truly felt that: 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork'."

When I next received a letter from the State Department of Education, I was expecting another Second, but to my sur-

prise and joy I had received a First Grade with an average of nearly 92 per cent. On arithmetic I scored 100 and on bookkeeping and physiology-hygiene 99 each, and my three history grades were 90, 93, and 95. This handsomely printed certificate with a small state seal at the top flanked by a one-room schoolhouse and the State Capitol was issued on September 26, 1903, over the signature of Thomas C. Miller, State Superintendent of Free Schools, and J. B. Grimes, Superintendent of Pocahontas County. Even yet, I am almost as proud of it as I am of my doctoral sheepskin from Columbia University, because I won the top teaching certificate at the age of 18 after only one short session in high school.

Class Periods

In my first teaching I was inclined to schedule too many short class periods — 35 to 38 in one day, repeating some classes in the lower grades. In practice, however, I found that fewer and longer class periods were more satisfactory and effective, with repetitions only for beginners. So, in my fourth school, I observe that I had only 24 scheduled classes a day, which indeed seem to be enough, ranging in length from 10 to 20 minutes and averaging about 15. Sometimes we would not be able to finish in a six-hour school day and would run past 4 P.M. 10 to 15 or even 30 minutes.

At the two 10-minute recesses and the noon hour the children were encouraged to exercise outdoors in fair weather in such school games as they might choose or devise with a minimum of supervision. Once, on Arbor Day, each boy brought a small tree to school and helped to set it on the school grounds, and for the girls I provided wild honeysuckle and rhododendron plants. Occasionally we would have spelling matches, verse recitations, and other exercises, or visits by the county superintendent. I issued printed monthly report cards to each child, giving his rating and signed by the teacher. At the end of the term parents and friends would attend the closing exercises.

Return to High School

By late November, in response to the advice and encouragement of Dr. Lacy, I had decided to return to his school for a second term beginning in January. I had seriously considered teaching a whole year and then going a year to high school, visiting the St. Louis Exposition during the intervening summer. Dr. Lacy thought schooling was more needful than a big

show, however, and advised me to repeat what I had done the year before since the procedure in my case was working very well. With return to high school in mind, I saved my nickels and dimes, studied Latin and mathematics, and read history and literature in order to enter at midyear with some hope of succeeding. Dr. Lacy repeated his offer of the first year. With the approval of my trustees to teach on Saturdays and holidays, I finished the term by January 14, 1904, and was off to Lewisburg by the first Greenbrier River train, though temporarily saddened at the thought of being away from home and my relatives for more than four months. But with travel and work, this mood soon passed, and in all of my schooling I was truly homesick only once when most of the boys had gone home leaving just two or three of us in the dormitory. On that occasion a good novel soon brought relief.

I was welcomed by the Lacys and the boys without incident, registered, and settled down to work. My studies were Bible, rhetoric and literature, algebra followed by geometry, second-year Latin, mental philosophy, and astronomy. The last, under Dr. Lacy, was one of my best courses whether in high school or college, giving me clear, basic knowledge on the structure of the universe and dispelling many of my childish fancies. In the Literary Society we continued to debate, once discussing the need to educate all Negroes, the affirmative rightly winning the debate. So busy was I that I made no record in my diary from February 20 to May 25.

Though we had no football or baseball games, we boys had various ways of exercising, as by running, jumping, "roly-poly," skating on ice or the frozen snow, rambling (once into a cave where our lights went out fearsomely), and doing our own room chores. One time some of the boys had a lot of mischievous fun by concealing themselves in white sheets and frightening Dr. Lacy's spirited horse grazing on the school grounds into snorting hysterics. When Dr. Lacy would come out to inspect, the boys would disappear, only to reappear when he had returned to his private home just off the campus, where we got our meals.

With $5 sent to me by my father I purchased an armful of books for summer reading — Cooper's five-volume "Leatherstocking Series," Irving's *History of New York* and *Sketch-Book,* and Shakespeare's "The Tempest." Irving's humor and flow of language I greatly enjoyed, keeping lists of unfamiliar words to learn. For story, humor, style, and characterization "The Tempest" and later "The Merchant of Venice" were truly fascinating. I loved Portia quite as much as Bassanio or the Author himself,

and Prospero's love of books and learning appealed to me. Cooper's stories of the Indians and pioneers I read as if they were the pure truth, completely surrendering myself to the hypnotic power of the novelist and reliving the lives of the characters.

In looking over my more ambitious high-school themes, I notice that I frequently chose to write about rather large, abstract topics concerned with conduct or one's future: for example, such topics as "Conscience," "Good Manners," "Our Mission," "Education," and "Courage." I think I chose these topics in order to make a study of them and clarify my own thinking about them, and they were very helpful in meeting this need. In writing themes, I used a dictionary, appropriate quotations, and my own observations and reflections. My instructors liked and approved my efforts. No topic could be larger or more inclusive than "Education" and some instructors would exclude it entirely as too large. However, we should remember that at a certain stage of development boys and girls need to get an over-all view of the big subjects and learn to bound them as they do countries in geography and give the main facts about them. They are not yet ready to specialize. My paper on "Education" began as part of a debate on the topic that the pen is more potent or influential than the sword. I learned of physical, mental, and moral education; that we get two educations, one from others and one by our own efforts. Surely young people need such general or comprehensive views of many large subjects, and if they fail to get them, they become lost in details and non-essentials. My 2,000-word paper on "Education" I read in a contest at our Teachers' Institute in August, 1903, and it was later published in the county newspaper.

My Third School

After spending the summer of 1904 on the farm, working, reading, thinking, writing, and planning, as indicated above, I began on August 29 to teach my third school at Huntersville, formerly the county seat of Pocahontas County and its oldest town, having been originally a meeting place for hunters and traders and the local militia. The town was beautifully located near Knapp's Creek on a flat point of elevated land jutting out into the mile-wide valley, with narrow gaps above and below the town, and surrounded by mountains, where the people could live quietly and peacefully.

Here I boarded at a small hotel kept by Cousin Zane and Ida Moore, two of the best and most industrious people that ever

lived, who let me have a room over the lobby with another boarder and my meals for $7 a month, leaving me $23 a month to finance my education and a prospective trip to St. Louis. To offset the increased living expenses in town, I had better mail facilities and better opportunities to associate with different types of people, and was only 11 miles from my home.

On the opening day two of my lovely cousins, prospective teachers, Lily and Mabel Milligan, visited the school to observe my procedures and pleased me with their praise, though I felt that the performance was just fair. These and other young women I liked to associate with and might have wholly lost my heart to them but for my dominant ambition to get an education and to put this quest first on my program. Not until I had graduated from college did Venus much affect me. In the school of 25 students, two older than myself, I found a poor state of discipline, apparently a hang-over from my predecessor, and the schoolroom was badly in need of cleaning. At once I set about improving both — a birch for a few boys and one girl, I regret to say, and soap and water for the building, applied by a squad of students with my direction and help.

After three weeks of diligent efforts my school was in fair working order, and I began to think of the big show of the year, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, which, publicized and visited by thousands of people, had been in preparation for more than three years and discussed for the last 10 or 20 years. I remember the Columbian Exposition of 1892-1893 in Chicago, attended by one of my aunts, and I had heard and read of the Centennial in Philadelphia, in 1876 — all of which filled me with a strong desire to visit something similar. So, for several weeks I schemed and planned, because my funds were limited and I needed them for education. Caught in this dilemma between schooling and travel to the exposition, I was pleased to learn that some of my friends thought that $30 to $40 spent on such a trip would be a good investment in education of its kind.

St. Louis Exposition

My first plan was to accompany some of my homefolks, but they decided not to go since my father preferred to invest the cost of a trip in a piano for my sisters and a special teacher for them after the public schools closed. Upon learning of this change in their plans, I joined a local party then being organized for the trip that grew to 14 members. They were: Dr. J. B. Lockridge and his daughter, Maude, and lawyer H. M. Lockridge and

his daughter, Ethel, all four direct descendants of the hero, Captain Andrew Lockridge; Cousin Ida Moore and her son, Winfred, of the Moses Moore family; Mrs. George Ginger of pioneer stock; Miss Carrie Moore, Mr. and Mrs. James Doyle, Elmer Moore, Joe Phillips, Cousin Locke Herold, and myself. The last four were unattached young men who tended to form a team for sight-seeing and protection. We had agreed to take little baggage, to wear comfortable shoes, and to carry little money. With $10 in my purse and $15 in my round-trip railway ticket, I securely pinned $20 in an inside shirt pocket since I had not yet heard of traveler's checks.

Leaving Huntersville on the fine clear morning of October 13, and traveling about 700 miles by way of Huntington, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis, we entered the Fair Grounds in St. Louis about 10 A.M. on October 15, 1904. Our first act was to ride around the grounds in a large bus-like automobile — my first ride in such a conveyance — for 25 cents. My first and most lasting impression of the exposition grounds and buildings was their magnitude, symmetry, and fairyland beauty.

Then, breaking up into convenient smaller groups, we began to tour the various buildings and to view the extensive exhibits. Transportation probably surpassed others in interest for me. How far had we advanced in traveling facilities from the camel and canoe to the steamboat, locomotive and automobile of 1904, the airplane still being only a hazardous plaything of great potentialities! The Lincoln log cabin and 264-foot Ferris wheel had unique appeal for all visitors. One afternoon by pre-arrangement I met Aunt Margie Cook of Parkville, Missouri, whose husband was, for many years, a popular professor at Park College. Another trip was to see a reproduction of Jerusalem with its camels, narrow, winding streets, and holy places. One Sunday some of us toured St. Louis itself, then a city of 750,000 inhabitants. Along the mile-long "Pike" in the fairgrounds, lined with shows, merry-go-rounds, scenic railways, spectacular paintings, imitated Boer War battle with uniformed soldiers and thundering cannon, and so on to satiation, we spent most of our late evenings, arriving at our lodgings in a private home about 11 P.M.

After making the trip and spending five days at the fair, I would sum up my views and reactions by saying: I was powerfully impressed by the vast agricultural resources of such midwestern states as Illinois, by the magnitude and prospects of such cities as St. Louis and Cincinnati, and by the phenomenal advancement of the nations as shown by this stupendous exposition. From the trip I learned a great deal, and the outlay was a sound investment,

though I felt the financial pinch for nearly a year afterward.

Desiring very much to visit my mother at Spencer, West Virignia, I left St. Louis one day ahead of our party and was accompanied by a school friend, Louis Baker, as far as Huntington, West Virginia, where I stopped intending to take a night train for Spencer. But I learned that there was no train till the next morning. So I went to a hotel, wrote a few letters, rested from my travels, and abandoned the Spencer trip regretfully for fear my ticket would expire and leave me stranded.

William Jennings Bryan

The next morning, October 21, as I walked leisurely to the postoffice, reading signs, admiring buildings, and watching people, I saw a large poster announcing that the Great Commoner, William Jennings Bryan, would speak in a Huntington theater that very night. I could scarcely trust my own eyes that thus, unexpectedly, I had a rare opportunity to see and hear this renowned speaker and noble American. In my youthful enthusiasm I regarded him as a leader and statesman to be classed with Jefferson and Lincoln. I quickly decided to spend the day in Huntington, visiting newspaper plants, the Carnegie Library, one of the public schools, and other places of interest, and then at night to hear the orator himself, many of whose speeches I had previously read.

To be certain of getting a desirable seat, I went to the theater an hour before the doors were to open. I was almost the first person to arrive there, but soon the Bryan enthusiasts began coming in such numbers that at least 600 greeted the opening of the doors. I got a seat immediately in front of the speaker's stand and about 40 feet away, where I could best hear, see, and observe the performance. As the Bryan train was somewhat late, an interval on the program was filled by state politicians eager to ride on the Bryan bandwagon, though he was not then a candidate but a supporter of the Democratic national ticket led by Alton B. Parker of New York.

Amid loud cheering and shouting, Bryan arrived at 8:20 P.M. and spoke till 9:45 on various planks of the Democratic platform – the money question, imperialism, the Filipinos, the army, the labor problem, the race question, his leadership of six million fools according to a Republican critic, and Senator Black's speech nominating Theodore Roosevelt for the presidency.

With much cheering approval as he scored telling points, Mr. Bryan held the rapt attention of his auditors in a theater packed to the doors. He impressed me as a man of pure character, much

knowledge, rich sympathies, and of great courage and ability. In my diary I observed that there could be no doubt of his wonderful oratorical powers. I think that I heard, understood, and appreciated every word and sentence he uttered and delivered in a graceful, forceful manner. His language flowed easily and naturally, his inflections rising or falling to suit his theme and to delight the hearer, the music of words spoken by a sincere, handsome man, concerned about the welfare of his country. But since he was opposing no one directly and was not himself a candidate, he was hardly aggressive but calm, easy, assured, and benevolent among his friends and admirers.

About 12 years later I heard him a second time address prohibition forces in a large Cincinnati auditorium, where a lot of the "Wets" tried to break up the meeting and mar his speech by getting up noisily from their seats in small successive groups and stalking from the hall in pretended scorn and disgust. Soon Mr. Bryan began to tell humorous stories with the result that the exit stopped and many of the retreating opposition slipped into rear seats and listened to the remainder of the speech. Without any show of anger but by cunning strategy, the orator completely outwitted the organized rowdies.

After Bryan's speech I left Huntington at midnight and came to Roncevert (French for Greenbrier), a junction point for the Greenbrier Branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. There unexpectedly for the last time I saw my Grandfather Ruckman for a few minutes before we boarded different trains that separated us forever, since a year later he died of typhoid fever at the age of 72. My brother Henry and I drove 75 miles across the mountains to his funeral at Mossy Creek, where my Ruckman grandparents are buried near the Herrings.

High-School Graduate

Back in Huntersville after this adventure to the Exposition and to hear the silver-tongued Bryan, I settled down to steady teaching, repaid a loan of $30 for the trip, and tried to save my remaining funds for a third term at Dr. Lacy's school. That $45 outlay for the Fair left quite a void. Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays came and passed without stopping my school except for a day or so. A long vacation was ruled out completely with the approval of my considerate and helpful trustees and the kind acquiescence of my students. In January at our concluding school exercises, I was surprised and gratified to receive presents paid for by student subscriptions still listed in the principal gift – a volume of Josephus' complete works along with a

few handkerchiefs — presented to me for the school children by one of the sweetest and brightest girls whose beauty and charm five years later, like Dante's Beatrice, transported me to the Heaven of Love!

To pay my expenses of $95 in Lewisburg for four months I had only $50. I had spent at the Exposition precisely enough to make up the deficit. Though I could not expect any gifts to help me, I felt confident that I could finance my schooling in some way, because my credit was good for small amounts among my friends. Soon after my arrival in Lewisburg I paid Dr. Lacy $15 on account and explained my financial circumstances to him. He graciously refrained from chiding me for the St. Louis trip and agreed to allow me ample time to pay him, since this was my third and last term in his school.

As the main school building had recently burned down, classes were meeting in an old Masonic building on the other side of town. The boarders had arranged to live in Dr. Lacy's large home, where they had been getting their meals previously. I roomed with a new teacher, Mr. R. W. Blain of Covesville, Virginia, a cultivated college graduate and a good man, who used to amuse me somewhat by his Sunday-afternoon practice of lying down on the bed to read his Bible, which always proved so quieting and consoling that he would soon be fast asleep to dream of Heaven and the angels!

In this our senior year, my roommate Leach and I conceived a plan of launching a little paper to aid the school and to show our appreciation of Dr. Lacy's good work in starting and operating this much-needed high school for boys under the sponsorship of Greenbrier Presbytery. After getting permission from the principal, we organized an editorial board with Leach and myself as editors and six other leading students as associate editors, one being secretary and another treasurer, whose financial responsibility was so slight that a bond was not required. In April the first number, named *The Outlook,* appeared, a six-page, double-column sheet about seven by ten inches with various news items, announcements, jokes, and a little charitable advertising from the local merchants, selling for five cents each. In May came a second number enlarged to eight pages without an increase in price, with news items, little essays, quoted poems, and more advertising under the same leadership. As evidence of the current value of money, the April number announced that a contract for $4,950 had been let for the construction of a new two-story, brick-veneer building with gymnasium, auditorium, bathroom, hot-water heat, and rooming accommodations for 40 boys, to be com-

pleted before the fall term. The board of editors, however, found themselves about $15 in debt, which they honorably but painfully extracted from lean purses, with a strong determination on my part to beware of the fascinations of journalism.

In January I had registered for these courses: Bible, moral philosophy, Latin III, Greek I, English history, geometry, and rhetoric with composition and literature, which at the end of the term I passed with an average grade of 94. On my Bible examination I received a grade of 99¾, which shows apparently that I then knew more of Paul's "Romans," "Corinthians," and "Hebrews," and John's "Revelation" than ever before or since. But the true explanation is simple. The instructor had previously supplied the class with 81 questions from which he assured us he would choose the test questions. I worked up the answers, planning in certain cases to quote from the Bible or the Shorter Catechism verbatim. I keep this test paper as a memorial of my high-school days.

Scholarship to College

At our commencement on May 22, 1905, preceded by four declaimers, two essayists, one orator, and four debaters, all with fixed time limits, I gave the final oration, as it was classified, on "Courage," an abstract subject, which I somehow succeeded in treating concretely. As evidence of my progress in high school, I quote two excerpts:

"Courage, as the word indicates, is a heart principle; an expression of what is in the heart; the manifestation of strong character. Although there are those who are by nature timid, yet as a rule, the absence of courage implies that the character is not genuine, that the conscience has been injured, and that the heart fears truth."

"Now, my friends," I concluded, "I have spoken to you of the two kinds of courage; I have shown how it is acquired, and I have also referred to six examples. As a final word, let me say that though disaster should snatch your fortune away and hunger visit your home; though the curse of war should come on you and the loss of friends should grieve your spirit; though the heavens above you should be dark and the earth beneath be cold; yet, if you have courage, it will carry you through the darkness of defeat and bring you out in the sunlight of victory."

The scholarship to Hampden-Sidney College was awarded to Frank Brown of Lewisburg, who later became a leading Presbyterian pastor with long service in Charleston, West Virginia, and Dallas, Texas. The scholarship to Washington and Lee Uni-

versity was given to me. My recollection is that the speaker's medal went to winsome and brilliant Lant Slaven, who became a lawyer. Soon after returning to my home, I received a cheering letter from Judge J. M. McWhorter of Lewisburg, who, as one of three judges, had heard my effort on the subject of "Courage." He commended my material and delivery and reported that one of them had voted to give me the speaker's medal. I was well pleased with the scholarship and happy to graduate and be prepared to enter college.

CHAPTER 6

Undergraduate Adventures

I WAS attracted to Washington and Lee University by the scholarship, by two famous names, by three alumni teachers, and by an energetic president, George H. Denny, who occasionally sent me a picture card of the college that held and stimulated my interest.

Among my ancestral stock, the Scotch-Irish had started the school near Staunton as Augusta Academy in 1749; then they renamed it Liberty Hall in 1776 and removed it to Lexington, where, by successive transformation, it became Washington Academy in 1798, Washington College in 1813, and Washington and Lee University in 1871. Since few institutions are so rich in historical and cultural associations, it would be the place for me to seek wisdom, where Americans honored Washington, great in victory, and Lee, great in defeat, and celebrated Stonewall Jackson, a native son of West Virginia.

Saving Funds for College

When I graduated from high school in May, 1905, I was eager to enter college without delay, but I did not have the necessary means. To be sure, I had received a scholarship to Washington and Lee worth $50 in tuition, which was offset, however, by a debt of $45 incurred in high school with my promise to pay it promptly. Wishing at the age of 20 to keep free of debt and to maintain my independence, I decided to teach in the public schools the following year, to save as much as possible there and in two summer vacations, and then, supported by my savings, to try the adventures of college life in the shadows of great char-